CANADIAN LICENSE PLATES

(Tap the province you wish to explore)

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Introduction

The evolution of a license plate

How it all began...

Automobiles began as unique curiosities put together by inventors and other tinkerers. By the late 1800s, several steam or electric driven prototypes had been put together. In 1897 the first gasoline powered car was introduced, in Sherbrooke, Quebec. In 1898 John Moodie of Toronto was the first to import a car into Canada, a Winton Runabout. It was not until the introduction of such factory produced cars, that they started to appear in noticeable numbers. Needless to say, this was quite a surprise to the local horses. Little by little, cars started appearing all across Canada around the turn of the century. They were seen as a luxury or a sports toy, and to many, a nuisance. As more and more of these "horseless carriages" appeared, laws governing their use were quickly laid down to maintain peace and order in the community. Rules of the road were put in place, some quite absurd by today's standards, and a formal vehicle registration system began.

Without any paved roads, the car certainly didn't travel far nor fast without getting stuck. Since they were also unproven technology, break downs were frequent, and it was up to the driver to get it going again. There were no garages, no mechanics, no gas stations - everything we take for granted nowadays. The purpose of early registration was two-fold:

1) To identify the vehicles on the road, particularly for law enforcement.
2) To raise revenue through taxation of these vehicles in order to develop better roads for travel.

The registration system gets underway.

Every province began a registration system at a different time, but Ontario was the first in 1903. Some of the major cities began a registration system before the province took over. Most provinces were formally registering vehicles by 1910, with 5,890 registrations from coast to coast. Each motorist was assigned a unique number to display on his vehicle. In those early days, no license plates were provided - instead motorists were required to find some means to display their number. Most produced markers of their own, often out of leather or rubber. In some cases they simply painted the registration numbers directly on the car. One motorist in Alberta ingeneously used a broom handle for the number 1, and successfully won his case in court! The registration number was considered permanent, part of the vehicle itself.

<< Add a couple of pictures here of old cars with pre-provincial registration plates >>

Annual registrations begin.

By the early teens, most provinces saw the need to enforce a yearly collection of registration fees due to the quickly growing number of motorized vehicles. This money was needed to begin development of a suitable highway network and to set up a system to administer and enforce the vehicle laws. Most provinces started issuing license plates out of tin or porcelain. Porcelain was not good since the plates tended to chip very easily. New ones had to be purchased by the motorist each year. Most threw last years' away, but a few nailed them up in the garage or barn, in a sense becoming the first license plate collectors. Some provinces tried using tabs to revalidate the license plates, but most found it easier to issue new license plates after each year. Back then, especially with rough driving conditions, many license plates did not last much longer than a year.

<< Add a couple of photos of cars with evident annual plates (maybe one teens, one 20s).

Registrations kept increasing year after year after the First World War. By the late 1920s, Ontario and Quebec

each had well over 100,000 vehicles on the road. The number of makes and models of cars was astounding with Ford leading the pack. Then the depression hit after the stock market crash of 1929 and took with it most of the car manufacturers. Car registration dropped slightly or remained stagnant for the years following up to WW2 as people kept only what they needed to get by. For most, a new car was out of the question. Still, registrations remained annual, and, if one was wise enough to keep saving last years license plates, an interesting run of plates was beginning to develop for each province.

The Second World War: Making plates last.

The Second World War was probably the most interesting time in the history of Canadian license plates. With the war in full force, a shortage of metal eventually developed, so license plates were either validated by tabs or windshield stickers rather than replaced annually. Some actually restamped the current year into last year's plates! One province even began making them out of wood! By the end of the war, the metal shortage subsided, and the provinces resumed issuing annual plates.

The post-war boom.

Car registration quickly zoomed upwards again after WW2 as veterans returned home and began raising families. Everyone saw a need for a new car. By 1953, Ontario alone had more than a 1,000,000 passenger cars registered on the road! The registration figures climbed continuously for each province until the present day. With the amount of traffic on the road nowadays one doesn't pause and wonder why!

<show a 50's car with 50s plates>

The modern era.

From the 60s to the 80s, license plates began to evolve to something more than numbers pounded in tin. Provinces started adding slogans, colorful graphics and even allowed motorists to personalize their own plates by selecting a message of their choice. Most plates have become reflectorized for visibility at night. Validation stickers started to take the place of tabs and are now the norm for enforcing annual registration. Aluminum became a preferred metal over steel due to its malleability, lighter weight and resistance to corrosion.

And other uses of license plates...

As we shall see later on, license plates have been issued for a multitude of purposes besides ordinary vehicle registration. Many different vehicle classes have gotten their own distinctive registrations. Certain professions such as HAM radio operators, doctors, politicians and judges have received distinctive plates. Many special events, including Royal visits have been commemorated. Extra cost issues representing special interest groups have been recently made available to the motorist. Municipalities have issued small tax plates for virtually every use imaginable.

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BIOGRAPHY

(Y I LUV PL8S)

I was born in Ottawa, Canada, in 1967, the same year as our Centennial so that makes me a Centennial baby. I have been interested in license plates as long as I can remember. I think it was because I liked all kinds of junk (I used to always follow the garbage truck and bring junk home!) and also I liked numbers (like the Count on Sesame Street, I used to always like to count things!). In a nutshell, plates seemed to satisfy both those childhood needs.

1971 Ontario License Plate

Dec '70: Here I am taking my Grandparents' new plates for the following year!
(My Dad had to drive back the next day to return them!)

Myself and my brother Paul in front of Dad's Pontiac
Notice how I'm pointing out the 1971 Ontario plate.

Here are the cars I remember when growing up. The year in brackets are when we had them. The first two cars are what Dad and Mom had respectively when they got married.

- 1963 Pontiac (- 1973), **284-64J in '71.**
- 1959 Beetle (- 1972), **??**
- 1966 Beetle (1972 - 75), **ETJ-256**
- 1969 Beetle (1975 - 78), **ERL-181**
- 1977 Audi Fox (1978 - 85), **LYH-611**

By the way, my parents still have those same plates, **LYH-611** on their current car!

Living in Ottawa, Ontario, I started out with mainly Ontario and Quebec plates. Most of what I got was from my Grandparents' farm near Chatham Ontario, and I vividly remember digging them out of the junk pile! When I was very young I spent a lot of time there. Sadly I have very little from my early collecting years, as our family considered license plates as junk, which eventually got thrown out. When it came to family pictures, I enjoyed holding up license plates as my favorite toy whereas my brother would hold up more 'normal' toys. I learned, much later, this is standard practise at ALPCA meets, but to me it was a natural thing to do.

Mar 76: My brother and I at the sugar bush, Ottawa Valley.

May 76: My brother and I in front of our blossoming apple tree in the back yard.

Jul 76: In front of our cabin in PEI.

- **I found this 1975 Quebec plate leaning against a mall window in Ottawa, in 1976**
- **I found this 'Mar 76' truck plate from someone's garbage can on the way home from school.**
- **Our trip to PEI was my first trip east of Quebec. I found this 1975 plate in behind a gas station in Charlottetown and was overjoyed when the owner let me have it. I still have this plate and here it is:**

Later travels took us to Maine, to Nova Scotia then to Western Canada. Everywhere we went, I tried to get license plates. This wasn't always easy, since I had slightly different priorities than Mom and Dad. In 1979, I bought a rusty 1929 Maine license plate at a flea market in Maine for $1, which was a princely sum for me in those days. Still, it was the oldest plate I had ever seen up to that point, and I could not believe they went that far back!

During the '82/'83 school year I lived in Switzerland for a year. We lived in Monthey (canton of Valais), a small town just south of Lac Leman, near the French border. I went to a Swiss French school (Ecole Commerciale), roughly the equivalent to Grade 10. Naturally during this time I became very fascinated with Swiss license plates, because they had colorful crests on them. Eventually I was able to spot all the cantons. I also became familiar with the less interesting plates of neighboring countries (Germany, France, Italy and so on). Equally

fascinating were those black/white ovals which helped you identify the country a car was from (the plates in most cases do not tell you the country). One plate which I found especially neat was the plate from Aosta (AO) which features the crest of a lion. I was content in simply spotting the license plates since it didn't look like I could collect any of these because they all looked permanent. I did find a couple Swiss bicycle and moped plates which are annually replaced.

We lived in the canton of Valais, and just south, over the mountains, was Italy (the region of Aosta)

Of course up until this point, I thought I was the only one who would have any interest in license plates. Certainly there was no one among my family or friends who considered this 'normal'. So, in 1984 I was suprised to learn that others actually collect license plates. It was an article in National Geographic World maganize that featured two young collectors, about my age in Markham Ontario and they had a much better collection than I did, covering most of the US. I don't think I felt more jealous in all my life! At the end of the article was the address to ALPCA. I requested a free newsletter (this April '84 issue you see on the left) and became quite amazed that there was so much to this strange hobby. The article featured many license plates from Mexico, and I couldn't believe that early ones existed (you mean they actually had *cars* down there back then???) It sure raised my level of awareness. Since ALPCA appeared to be too much of a "big boy's club" to me, I decided not to join at that time. 11 years would pass before I joined the club in 1995.

During my undergraduate years at Carleton University, I was too busy to focus much attention on license plates. It is not after my graduation in 1990 that I started to move around a lot. Since I was independent, I found I could then look for plates in these new places without relying on Mom and Dad! I always tried to get something from every new place I lived. Sometimes I got a lot, especially in Quebec. I started a Master's in Aerospace Studies at the University of Toronto in the fall of 1990 and finished it in 1993. Since I was living in Toronto, and I already had Ontario plates, I did not bother collecting for any of those years. License plate collecting for me did not take off until I graduated and later started an assignment with Maritime Nuclear in Fredericton, in 1995.

I started to seriously collect when I lived in New Brunswick because I was curious to know what their early plates looked like. I had only one or two recent NB plates in my collection. I found a few plates at the local flea markets and for the first time I met a serious collector, Gary Doherty (ALPCA #3218) who no doubt wowed me with his collection which included a complete run of NB plates back to 1911! Then come spring, I hit the jackpot. I discovered this dump of old plates you see at left quite by accident. While mountain biking in the back woods, behind where I worked, I stumbled across this old junkyard, where the cars were very old. Before I knew it, I found an old plate (1958), then another, and another, and eventually I was lead to the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow! As you can see this was a plate collector's paradise! It seemed that all the unused left-overs for the years 1957, 58 and 1960 were dumped here by the city. They probably were sitting there for at least 30 years. Needless to say a lot were badly rusted or soiled, but suprisingly some of them were protected from the elements and were rusty only around the edges. In some cases the original paper envelopes that these plates came in were still intact! It goes without saying that I made

several trips to this site. I did not take an unreasonable amount, leaving plenty for the next guy, and I by no means got to the bottom of the piles. Who knows, the unissued leftover of the Lt. Governor's plate may be awaiting...

Once I realized I had more duplicates than I knew what to do with, I decided to join a license plate collector's club to meet other collectors and trade plates. I joined ALPCA in the summer of 1995 and have been a member since. I am indebted to Gary Doherty who encouraged me to join ALPCA and also who was very generous in supplying me with a lot of duplicates from his own large inventory. I attended my first plate meet in New Brunswick during Sept. '95 and even though not many collectors showed up, it gave me a flavor of what a plate meet is all about. Heck, we even got Newspaper coverage! After I moved back to Toronto, I started trading with other collectors through the mail and over the Internet.

In 1996 I attended my first ALPCA convention in Peoria Ill, and being overwhelmed was an understatement. Naturally I became a kid in a candy store as I found plate after plate after plate to add to my collection! I was also happy that I was able to trade many of my duplicates (a lot of New Brunswick plates) so in the end I didn't spend much money. Jon (a fellow Ontario collector whom I met over the Internet) and I shared a table. Jon has his own website called the Backbumper.

It's kind of coincidental that I have plates with my ALPCA # on them corresponding to the states I have lived in.

In 1997 I took a new and exciting opportunity in the States and moved to Newark Delaware. I found license plate collectors to be much more in close proximity in the US than in Canada making it easier to attend meets. Delaware plates are both fascinating and challenging to collect. I was very proud of the porcelain Delaware plate that I had on my car. A year later I moved to Fairfax VA but I found the earlier Virginia plates rather boring, so I decided to focus on Washtington DC plates instead. I did not succumb to the temptation to get all those colorful Virginia graphics which you see everywhere nowadays.

In March 1996, I travelled to Japan for the first time and became fascinated with Japanese license plates. Unlike North American plates, these are a challenge to identify. I made a return trip in April 1998 and you can see many of my photos on my SUGOI! Japanese web-site.

My favorite Japanese Plate is this temporary (dealer) plate with the distinctive red stripe.

Over the years, I have decided to focus on license plates that have some sentimental value to me. This is usually plates from places I've been to, or those issued during my birthyear. And because of my fantasy with Tigers, I love Tiger-related plates. You can see what I collect from my wanted list. Perhaps you have something that I need. You can look at my trade list and see what I have available. Let's trade!

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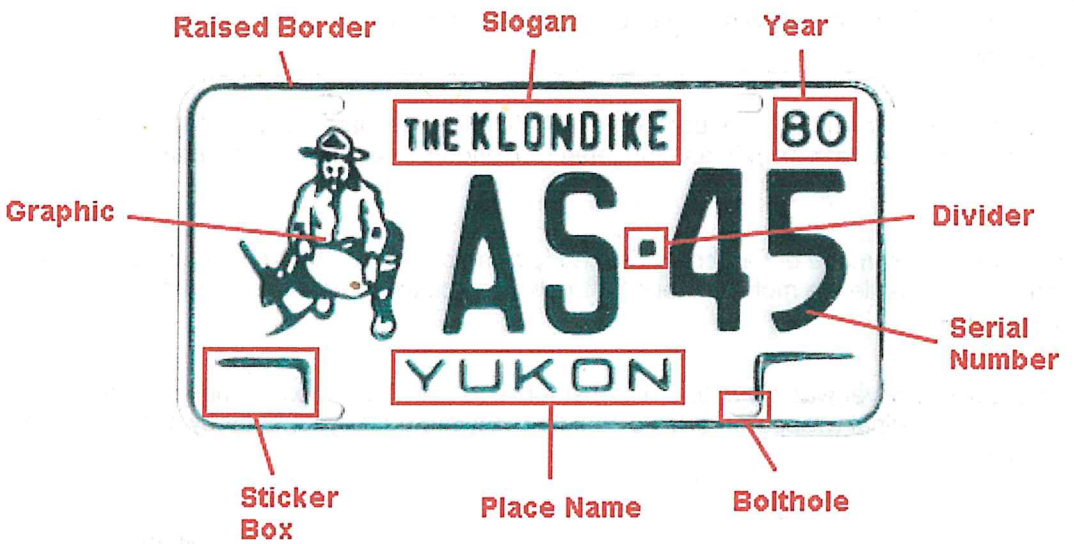
Glossary

Here are a few terms used in describing license plates:



baseplate or ***base*** **-** A permanent or semi-permanent plate, often *undated*, intended for several years of use.

booster **-** A plate not intended for registration purposes, usually attached to the front of the car. Often advertises a specific pace or event. Often used by car dealerships in jurisdictions where there isn't any front plate.

die **-** The style or font of the registration number embossed or printed on the plate. ***die-type*** **-** when a particular issue is made using more than one die style, for example the 1938 Ontario.

DMV **-** Department of Motor Vehicles. The body responsible for issuing license plates to motorists. Sometimes called the **RMV** (Registrar) or **BMV** (Bureau).

embossing **-** The raised inscriptions stamped into the plate. If the inscriptions are impressed downwards, the plate is said to be ***debossed***

fiberboard **-** The group of plates which are issued on composite wood-fiber material. The most famous plates in Canada are the pre 1925 Quebec issues.

first issue **-** The first year license plates were officially issued by the jurisdiction, for a particular use. This does not refer to the first plate issued for any particular series, such as "1" or "AAA 001".

natural **-** A license plate issued, to expire the same year as the top sticker showing. This means there should only be one sticker, as opposed to several thereby showing several years of use.

passenger **-** A privately owned car for the sole purpose of personal transportation. Usually the most common vehicle registration class. ***non-pass*** refers to all other classes (truck, trailer, motorcycle, taxi and so on).

prefix **-** A letter or group of letters which comes before the serial number on certain license plates. If the letter

(s) come after the serial number they are called a ***suffix.***

pre-provincial - A owner-provided marker or tag displaying the registration number, before the province began officially issuing license plates. It is most often made of leather, rubber or wood but occasionally made of tin or porcelain.

run - A group of license plates of the same type, usually covering a number sequential years. It may also refer to a group of license plates, one from each province. i.e. *Ontario run* (from 1911 to date) or *motorcycle run* (one from each province and territory).

tab - A piece of metal, usually containing the date, used to revalidate a license plate. It is usually bolted over a corner, covering the existing date. A ***date strip*** is an elongated tab, often containing the place name along with the date.

temporary - A license plate, usually made of cardboard, issued to a motorist for a short period of time typcially for a month or less. This is often while the motorist waits for the license plates to be issued, or has to move a car from one location to another.

unissued - A license plate which never was given to a motorist for registration purposes. These are often found in mint condition, in their original wrappers. Such plates normally are destroyed, but they sometimes fall into the hands of collectors.

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ALBERTA License Plate History

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style of 1914-15 (14 is smaller)

Style of 1916-17

Style of 1918-24

1924 Type II

How it all began...

Motor vehicles were required to be registered just one year after Alberta became a province in 1906. Prior to that, it was considered part of the NWT. The province assigned a number, and the motorist was required to provide the markers. These were usually made of leather or sometimes painted directly on the car. One motorist Joe Morris was assigned #1, and he took the liberty of displaying his number using a broomstick! After being dragged into court he won his case by arguing that the broomstick was in the shape of the number '1'. So, needless to say, the early markers didn't always carry the identification of the province. In 1912 the province began issuing annual license plates.

Early Alberta plates are quite rare, simply because Alberta did not become a developed province until the 40s, when the oil boom started after the war. Its population and wealth back then were considerably lower than they are today.

Physical Characteristics

1906-11	Owner Provided
1912-13	Porcelain
1914-15	Flat Steel crimped over Wire Rim
1916-17	Flat Steel
1918-36	Embossed steel
1937	Windshield sticker used to validate '36 plate
1938-44	Embossed Steel
1945	Windshield Sticker for '44 plate. Some new registrants received '45 dated plates.
1945-51	Embossed Steel
1952	Embossed Steel, beaded reflectorized numbers
1953	Aluminum tab on '52 plate.
1952-66	Embossed Steel
1967	Embossed Steel, Beaded reflectorization
1968-73	Embossed Steel, Beaded reflectorized numbers
1974	Plate sticker used to validate 73 base.

Style of 1925-31

Style of 1932-36
Bottom plate is a replacement

Style of 3/38 - 3/40

Style of 3/41-3/42

Unique slogan for 3/43

Windshield Sticker for 1945

1975-84	stickers)
1984-91	Steel reflectorized graphic, (validated by plate stickers)
1992-date	Steel *unreflectorized* graphic (validated by plate stickers)

- Alberta's first porcelain plate shares the same design as the '11 Ont, '11 Man & '13 BC.
- There were two types issued in 1924. The more common type resembles the 1918 through 1923 design, and the latter has the design similar to the 1924 Ontario plate with the crimped over edges.
- For many years, if you lost one of your plates, a replacement was made up from a blank with the numbers painted on, such as the 1933 shown at left and this motorcycle plate below.

- From 1938-52, plates were marked to expire 3/31 of that year. There is no dated '37 plate.
- Alberta was the first province to use beaded reflecotrization on a general issue, in 1952.
(Ontario had beaded reflectorized plates in 1939 but that was only for Doctors).
- Beaded reflectorization was used for the entire plate only in 1967. The white background was an unfortunate choice as the plates quickly became dirty and illegible.
- Reflectorization was *abandoned* in 1992 as a cost-cutting measure.
- There are many die types from 1975 onwards based on various manufacturers used.
- All plates issued since 1984 are valid.

This flat tin plate which shares the same dies and manufacture as the 1920 Ontario is not the normal 1921 plate (which should be embossed, with "ALTA" & "1921" on the right). However the colors are accurate. Experts aren't exactly sure why this is. Perhaps it is a replacement for an Albertan motorist who lost his plate in Ontario, or more likely, a manufacturer's sample from the same company that made the 1920 Ontario plates.

Style of 3/44-3/52

Note the officially issued front booster plate, to promote highway safety.

Style of 1956-63

Unique to 1967

Style of 1964-66, 68-72

From about the 20s to 50s, Alberta issued plates with a red border to residents within Banff National Park. This was so that they could easily be spotted and flagged through the gates. What did they do, if the plate itself was red? They resorted to a green border!

Just a few of the many styles for the current Wild Rose Graphic base.

Slogans & Graphics

1913-15	Provincial Crest
1941-42	"DRIVE SAFELY"
1943	"CANADA"
1967	"1867 - 1967" w/ Stylized maple leaf.
1973-date	"WILD ROSE COUNTRY"
1984-date	Wild Rose graphic.

- **1967:** 100th Anniversary of the formation of Canada

Numbering Systems

- 1951	Numeric, up to 6 digits
1952-53	12A34, 1A234 formats
1954-59	AB 123 format
1960-63	AB 1234 format
1964-74	AB·12·34 format
1975-date	ABC·123 format

Non-passenger types

C, CV	Commercial
D	Dealer
E	Exempt
F	Farm
G	Government owned vehicle

Style of 1973-74

Style of 1975-84
(Different die types exist)

Style of 1984-date

Current motorcycle plate

Trailer

In most cases, the type is spelled out on the plate. The letters shown may not be in the prefix position, but often in the second position.

Early ambulance / doctor plates. The first one was made from a regular passenger.

Special Issues (1988 Calgary Winter Olympics)

This is the approved special issue, designed by MVLS, the official licensee of this product. The plate could only be displayed on the front and had to match the motorist's rear plate, per section 46.1 of the Motor Vehicle Administration Act. It was valid for the duration of the Olympics, and for a short period after that, until Mar. 31, 1988. These plates were also made up as souvenirs for residents outside the province. Shown here is such a sample.

This is the souvenir version of the above plate, made of thin aluminum and non-reflectorized. Various designs were available, but none could be registered to any vehicle.

According to the ALPCA Newsletter, this plate was on one of 35 vehicles which drove across Canada bearing the Olympic torch. One resident of Sherbrooke Quebec told me he vividly remembered these plates as the motorcade passed through his hometown.

Links:

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1973-date, Vehicle Registration Figures.
- Under the Alberta Govertment Services, the Motor Vehicle Department handles the registration system.

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Photo Credits:

ALPCA Archives: '33 Ambulance.
Alan Betts: '15, '19, '33 pr, '39 Med
Dave Hollins: '33
Dick Pack: '40 m/c
Roger Reid: '17

BRITISH COLUMBIA License Plate History

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Pre '13 leather

How it all began...

The province started registering vehicles as early as 1904. It was up to the owner to make up markers to display the registration number assigned. Leather, metal numbers and wood were often the materials used. The letters "BC" appear on the majority of these owner-provided plates. BC was rather late mandating officially provided plates. By 1912, legislation was passed to mandate annual registration beginning in 1913, when the province began issuing the license plates, made of porcelain.

At some point, the city of Victoria also required vehicles to be licensed. The city provided a small porcelain plate, black on white, that was undated. It is not clear when this plate was issued, or if had to be used in conjunction with the BC plates, or instead of, depending on where the car travelled. More research is needed on this particular plate; only about 3 are known making it undoubtedly very rare today.

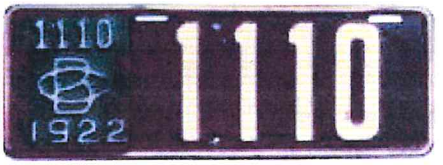
Rare City of Victoria Issue

Physical Characteristics

1905-12	Owner provided.
1913-14	Porcelain
1915-17	Flat Steel crimped over Wire Rim
1918	Embossed Steel
1919	Embossed Steel tabs for '18 base w/ matching serial number. Temporary Cardboard plate to some new registrants
1920	Embossed Steel
1921-22	Embossed Steel Tabs for '20 base w/ matching serial number.
1923-50	Embossed Steel
1951	Embossed Steel Date Strip for '50 base

'18 with '19 tab

Cardboard Temporary



Style of 1920-22 (note the matching tab)

1952	Embossed Aluminum, only numbers painted
1953-54	Embossed Aluminum tabs for '52 base
1955-69	Embossed Steel
1970-72	Embossed Steel, blue on white base. undated base validated by plate stickers
1973-78	Embossed alumnium, blue on white, plate stickers.
1979-86	Embossed aluminum, white on blue, plate stickers A few plates were embossed steel.
1986-date	Aluminum reflectorized graphic, plate stickers

- The first official issue was 1913. Before that plates were provided by the owner.
- The '13 plate shares the same design as the '11 Ont, '11 Man & '12 Alta.
- A post-war metal shortage resulted in the issue of some cardboard temporary plates in 1919.
- On current plates, a small sticker indicating the day of the month of expiry is placed in the center.
- Only the current graphic plate issued since 1987 is valid.

Two types of the '52 base.
The latter without the date was most likely issued in '53 or '54.

Slogans & Graphics

1915-17	Provincial Seal
1952-54	Maple Leaf w/ Totem Pole (On the base plate and the tabs)
1958	"1858 CENTENARY 1958"
1964-date	"BEAUTIFUL"
1986	Expo 86 Sticker
1987-date	Provincial Flag

Style of 1924-35

Style of 1936-49

Style of 1952-54

Style of 1955-57

Style of 1959-63

- **1958:** 100th Anniversary of entry into Confederation (1858)

Numbering Systems

to 1947	Numeric, up to 5 digits
1948-49	Numeric or prefix letter 5-characters
1950, 51	Numeric up to 6 digits
1952-54	Numeric up to 5 digits. Letter may appear in first or second position
1955-69	Numeric up to 6 digits
1970-date	Standard ABC-123 format.

- From 1932-45 a preceding dash was used if the number was less than 5 digits.
- Conventionally, the Premier received the lowest number plate. When they were all numeric, this would be '1' and when they went Alpha-Numeric in 1970, AAA-001.

Non-passenger types

A	Farm Truck
C	Commercial
D	Dealer
F	Farm Tractor
J, K	Commercial
N	National Defense
T	Logging Truck

- In 1953 and 1954, annual plates were issued for most non-passenger types.
- From 1970 onwards, anything that didn't follow an ABC-123 format was non-passenger.

Notice the absence of a maple leaf on this Commercial plate. The tab for '53 even had an indent to allow for the last 'A' in 'COLUMBIA' !

Style of 1964-70

Style of 1970-72

Style of 1973-78

Style of 1978

Style of 1979-86

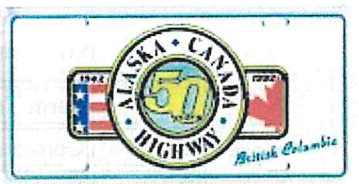
Style of 1986-date

Current motorcycle plate

Special Issues

The plate went either below the front or rear license plate, but did not replace it. Celebrated BC's Centennial, as the normal license plate did not.

The vanity base-plate is different from the normal passenger plate. Oddly enough this was BC's first graphic plate as it came out before the flag graphic, in the early 80s.



This officially issued booster plate issued in 1992 commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Canada Highway linking BC, Yukon and Alaska. This was quite a feat in 1942 when major road construction up North was almost unheard of. Also issued for Yukon & Alaska.

This APEC issue was only available to participants in the APEC summit, Nov. 19-25 1997, and was only valid during that time period.

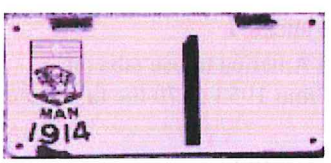
The top one was used only by Police Cars in the motorcade, whereas all other vehicles involved with the APEC Summit were issued the Federal plate below. The latter were issued with and without the maple leaves.

Links:

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1970-date, Vehicle Registration Figures.
- Dan Howlett has a good page on the current BC plates. Here he tells you how they were issued and more than you'd ever want to know about the current plates.
- The motor vehicle registration today is handled by the ICBC (Insurance Corporation of British Columbia). They play both the role of Registrar of Motor Vehicles and insurance agent.

MANITOBA License Plate History

<-- Saskatchewan | HOME | Ontario -->



Style of 1913-14

Style of 1915-16

Style of 1917-19
(two varieties of 1919)

How it all began...

The Winnipeg Auto Club was formed in 1904, and shortly thereafter on Feb. 25, 1908 the province required all motor vehicles to be registered for the flat fee of $2. The registrant received a round aluminum disc to be mounted on the dashboard, and the markers were to be owner-provided. Unfortunately not many of these owner-made plates carry any inscription of Manitoba, making them difficult to authenticate without supporting documentation. They are typcially made of leather, with metal house numbers attached.

Early dashboard disc, dated 1911.

On March 24, 1911, legislation was passed mandating annual registration with the province providing the plates. Fees were $5 for all vehicles, except $2 for motorcycles. It is thought that motorcycles received discs instead of plates that year, based on old photos.

Physical Characteristics

1908-10	Owner Provided.
1911-14	Porcelain
1915-16	Flat Steel crimped over wire rim.
1917-18	Flat Steel
1919	Embossed steel tab for '18 plate. Issued in pairs. Late registrants received a dated '19 plate, with the "tab" painted on!
1920-42	Embossed Steel
1943	Embossed Steel Tab for '42 plate. Number on tab must match number on plate
1944	Windshield Sticker for '42 base.
1945-48	Embossed Steel
1949	Embossed Aluminum Tab for '48 plate.
1950	Embossed Steel
1951	Embossed Aluminum Reflective Tab for '50 plate
1952-57 **1958-63** **1964-70**	Embossed Aluminum base-plates, sometimes undated Date strips used for intervening years, up until 1970
1971-75	Embossed Aluminum reflectorized base-plates.

Unique to 1920

Style of 1924-25

Style of 1927-30

Style of 1933-37

Dies Unique to 1939

Style of 1940-44

1943 tab for '42 plate (enlarged)

Uniqute to 1945

1983-86	validated by plate stickers.
1987-97	Embossed Alluminum base-plate, validated by plate stickers
1998-date	Embossed Aluminum graphic, validated by plate stickers.

- The first official issue was 1911. Before that plates were provided by the owner.
  Unfortunately there was no stipulation that the province name appear on the plate. Therefore these may be hard to identify.
- Manitoba's first porcelain plate shares the same design as the '11 Ont, '11 Man & '12 Alta.
- **NOTE:** from '20 to '24 dealer plates used opposite color schemes, but are otherwise indistinguishable from the passenger plates. Since the paint may be gone on these plates, the best clue is the number:
  - '20: 35,000 and above
  - '21: 45,000 and above
  - '22-'25: 50,000 and above
- One of the '41 plates had to be turned in for the war effort in order to receive the '42 plates.
- **NOTE:** Some of the '48 bases (6 digit) are undated.
- Manitoba was the last jurisdiction in North America to use tabs on plates. Use of these tabs ended in 1970. From 1953 to 70 the tabs were for the rear plate only.
- The plates issued from '83-'86 were valid until 1997.
- Interestingly enough, reflectorization was dropped in 1987 as a cost-cutting measure, but it was re-introduced with a new graphic in 1997.
- Only the current graphic plate issued since 1997 is valid.

Slogans & Graphics

1912-19	Provincial Seal
1958-70	Small Bison in left hand corner of plate
1971-75	Bison Motif
1971-75	"100,000 LAKES"
1976-date	"FRIENDLY MANITOBA"
1997-date	Lake Scene graphic w/ Bison

- **1967:** 100th Annversary of the Formation of Canada, Confederation. (1867)
- **1970:** 100th Anniversary of joining Confederation (1870)
- The Bison Motif plate is one of my favorites.

Numbering Systems

up to 1916	Numeric, up to 4 digits
1917-47	Numeric, up to 5 digits

Style of 1946-49

Style of 1950-51

Style of 1952-57

Style of 1958-63

Style of 1964-70

Style of 1971-75

1948-49	Numeric, up to 6 digits
1950-57	Alphanumeric, 3 to 5 characters letter in 2nd or 3rd position.
1958-70	Alphanumeric, 3 to 5 characters letter in 2nd or 3rd position 2 letter prefix also possible.
1971-75	Two letter, followed by 1 to 4 numbers
1976-82	ABC-123 format
1983-97	123-ABC format Some of the early plates only had one or two digits.
1997 - date	ABC-123 format

- From 1952 to 1970 the complicated 5 character numbering scheme was very similar to Ontario's from 1937-54 .

Non-passenger types

CT	Commercial Truck
D	Dealer
DC	Delivery Car
FT	Farm Truck
T	Truck
TL	Trailer

- In most cases the type is spelled out on the plate.
- During 1944 most vehicles received winshield stickers but others such as trailers and motorcycles received tabs or plates.
- RA stands for "Remote Area", a passenger car registered in a region of limited road access, therefore qualifying for lower registration fees. Not many of these are isssued.

Rare '44 m/c tab

In an ingeneous way of recycling, the 1944 Manitoba trailer plate was made from the turned in 1941 plates. The 'TL' inscription was screened on, and a '44 sticker added!

Note the big lettering on this plate.

Current motorcycle plate

Style of 1976-82

Style of 1983-86

Style of 1987-97

Style of 1998-date

Boosters and Tag Toppers

This officially sanctioned booster plate could replace the front plate for 1957. However, it had to be replaced, the following year.

Manitoba is referred to as the Keystone Province because it is in the centre of the country where East meets West. This slogan was used for decades, though today you don't hear much about it.

In 1967, to celebrate Canada's Centennial and the Pan American Games in Winnipeg, the province issued this special booster plate at extra cost. It could be displayed on the front of the car but the front plate had to be kept for the following years.

In 1970, another officially sanctioned booster plate of similar design was issued. This one celebrated Manitoba's Centennial into Confederation. The 'First "IN" Province' means Manitoba was the first province to join Confederation after Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia formed Canada in 1867.

This interesting booster plate celebrates Winnipeg's Centennial in 1974. It is made of thin plastic, so it probably didn't last. However it was sold with a neat frame which more than likely was used for years after the centennial.

This cast aluminum license plate "topper" was attached above the rear plate. It was issued by the Manitoba Motor League to members, and annually validated by aluminum discs, from the 1920s to about the 50s.

Links

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1971-date, Vehicle Registration Figures.
- Manitoba non-passenger plates, by Manny Jacob: 1983-97 bases

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Last updated Oct 27, 2001

Photo Credits:

ALPCA Archives: '11, '11 disc, '39, '42, '43 tab, '44 m/c tab, '49, '61 Taxi, '44 Trailer.
eBay: '12, '15, '20, '24, '28, '37, '45, '50
Alan Betts: '19s
Andrew Osborne: '19, '41/'44 Trailer.
Eric Taylor: '14

NEW BRUNSWICK License Plate History

<-- Québec | HOME | Nova Scotia -->

pre-11 leather

1910 porcelain
(not a provincial issue)

Style of 1911-16

Style of 1918-19

How it all began...

Vehicles were first officially recorded in Fredericton (the capital) in 1905, but no plates were issued. Interestingly, this makes NB the third province, after Ontario and Quebec, to officially record motor vehicles. The province began registering vehicles in 1908 and, up until 1910, the plates were provided by the owner. These markers were often white on black, and made of leather, with the initials NB usually printed vertically after the serial number. A dated 1910 porcelain plate is known to exist but it too is provided by the owner as the province did not start officially supplying plates until 1911 when annual registration took effect. NB had a longer run of porcelain plates than any other province. They lasted until 1917 and were in a beautiful array of colours. They are rare, and highly prized today.

Believe it or not, NB motorists were required to drive on the left side of the road until Dec 1, 1922! This posed a challenge for neighboring Maine which always had been driving on the right!

NB issued dashboard discs (to accompany the license plates) from 1908 to about 1922. The plate number was duplicated on the disc, ensuring the plates were not illegally transferred to another vehicle. The motorist would receive the same number plates each year, provided he owned the same car.

Physical Characteristics

1908-10	Owner Provided
1911-17	Porcelain
1918-21	Flat Steel crimped over Wire Rim
1922-42	Embossed Steel
1943-44	Windshield Stickers for '42 plate
1945-60	Embossed Steel
1961	Windshield Sticker for '60 plate
1962 **1964**	Embossed Steel base-plate years (white on red) Plate Stickers for intervening years:

Style of 1920-21

Style of 1922-23, 25-27

Unique to 1924 (tough paint year)

Style of 1928-30

Style of 1932, 34

Style of 1933, 35, 36

Style of 1937-41

1960	1963, 1965, 1967, 1968
1969 **1972** **1975** **1978**	Embossed Steel reflectorized base plate years. Plate stickers for intervening years: 1970-71; 1973-74; 1976-77; 1979-85
1987-92	Embossed Steel reflectorized (green/blue lettering) Plate stickers validating plate from '88-'92
1991-date	Aluminum reflectorized graphic - plate stickers.
1993-date	Aluminum reflectorized graphic, plate stickers

- The first official issue was 1911. Before that plates were provided by the owner.
  A dated 1910 porcelain issue exists, but that was owner provided.
- The '24 and '31 issues were unique since the top and bottom edges were crimped back.
- A matching windshield sticker for the front was issued from 1945-47.
- There is no dated 1986 plate since the '87 base was issued in Jan. '86 and marked to expire '03/87' in the sticker box.
- There were at least 3 distinct die types for the '87 base. Because the earliest ones rusted badly, a new manufacturer was tried (Waldale Manufacturing of Nova Scotia). They made plates with rounder dies, which held up much better. All of these were phased out in 1992 when the new graphic was introduced in 1991.
- Only the current graphic issued since 1991 is valid.

Slogans & Graphics

1954-61	Provincial Crest
1958-71	"PICTURE PROVINCE"
1972-date	"NEW/NOUVEAU BRUNSWICK"
1991-date	Viking Ship

- **1972:** New Brunswick becomes Canada's only officially bilingual province with plates to match. Roughly 2/3 are English, 1/3 are French.

Numbering Systems

to 1930	Numeric, up to 5 digits
1931-36	A-1234 format, First letter denotes issuing office code: **F** Fredericton **R** Restigouche **J** St. John **S** St. Stephen **M** Moncton **W** Woodstock **N** Northumberland **A,K** Reserve Series
1937-57	Numeric, up to 5 digits
1958-86	Numeric, up to 6 digits
	ABC-123 format. All plates begin with 'A', starting with

	AAA-100
1991-date	BCD-123 format. Numbering started at BAA-000.

Style of 1942-49

Style of 1950-53

Style of 1954-56

Unique to 1957

Style of 1958-60

Style of 1962-63

- The codes in use from '31 to '36 were taken from a 1932 Article in the St. John *Telegraph.* In 1931, there were likely more codes in use than those shown.
- Low numbers (under 1000) were typically issued to VIPs on request.
- It is interesting to note in the 1991 series, 'BOO-000', a *scary* combination, was part of the regular series. It was issued to a motorist in Bathurst.

Non-passenger types

A, B, C, Cxx, D	Commercial Truck (various classes)
D	Dealer (1991 -)
F	Farm
G, GS	Government Service
H	Hire (Taxi)
L	Large Truck
M	Miscellaneous (fire truck, ambulance, back-hoe etc)
T	Trailer
X	Semi-Annual Truck

Some interesting designs of dealer plates.

In the porcelain years, the dealer plates were undated but were of the same colors as the passenger plates. This plate is 1917.

'61 Dealer. Passenger cars received windshield stickers that year.

In 1943 and 44, windshield stickers were used for vehicles with windshields. Trailers, tractors and motorcycles were issued small wooden plates, due to the shortage of metal!

Style of 1964-65

Style of 1966-68

Style of 1969-71

Style of 1972-74
(75-80 also similar)

Style of 1981-85

Style of 1986-89

Wooden motorcycle, light trailer and tractor plates.

Current motorcycle plate.

Because there was no front plate from 1962-68 so people had the option of displaying booster plates. Many styles appeared. Cities, commemorative events, safety slogans, special groups and even car dealerships all got into the act. Most were made to conform to the provincial standard of white on red at the time. A sampling is shown below.

Booster plates of 1962-68 era

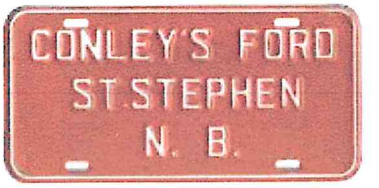
Regular provincial issue

Canada's Centennial (1967)

Town issue for Sussex

City issue for St. John

Shriners



Car Dealership

Special Issues

This special issue to promote nature conservation became available to the motorist in 1998, for a $25 extra fee for a pair. Every year an additional $5 is levied on the registration to benefit parks and wildlife.

Style of 1991-92

Style of 1990

Style of 1991 - date

Y2K plate - different die style

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1962-date, Vehicle Registration Figures.
- *nbplates.com* A nicely done site covering all types of NB plates past and present.
- The New Brunswick Dept. of Transportation handles the registration of motor vehicles.

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Last Updated Oct 11, 2000

Photo Credits:

Vintage Vehicles of Canada: dashboard disc
ALPCA Archives: pre'11 leather, '11
Alan Betts: '12
Jocelyn Doucet: '44 tractor
Drew Steitz (PL8S) : NB wooden m/c & light trailer.
Eric Taylor: '10, '17 Dealer

Rest are attributed to the Webmaster.

NEWFOUNDLAND License Plate History

<-- Nunavut | HOME | PEI -->

City of St. John's (Style of 1920-25)

Style of 1926

Style of 1927-29

Style of 1930-36

How it all began...

Because of its obvious remoteness and rugged terrain, Newfoundland did not have much of a road system beyond the capital, St. John's. The city started registering vehicles in 1906, three years after the first car arrived on the island. Vehicles were assigned a permanent number by the City Council, and white on black number plates were to be provided by the owner. The city started providing metal plates (made by a company in St. Louis Missouri!) when annual registration took into effect in 1920. These had no other identifying features than the date and registration number. The name "Nfld" did not appear until the province took over the registration system in mid-1925. There is some suspicion a '25 with 'NFLD' printed on it doesn't exist as the law changed mid-year and there wouldn't have been time to order it from the manufacturer in St. Louis.

Since Nfld did not join Canada until 1949, all issues before that could justifiably be viewed as British Colony rather than Canadian plates. However most specialists collect them as Canadian plates. It is a challenging task as the early plates are very rare, and because of harsh weather conditions, are not easy to find in decent condition (as you can see on the left). No plates have ever been found for 1921 and '23.

Physical Characteristics

1906-19	Owner Provided
1920-43	Embossed Steel
1944	Embossed Steel, overpainted '42 plate. (1942 plates reused, painted red on black)
1945	Flat Tin, handpainted.
1946-65	Embossed Steel
1966-70	Embossed Steel, Reflectorized
1971-72	Plate stickers used to validate '70 base.
1973-75	Embossed Steel, validated by plate stickers in '74, '75.
1976-81	Embossed Steel, validated by plate stickers '77-'81
1982-92	Embossed Steel, reflectorized, validated by plate stickers
1993-date	Embossed Steel or Aluminum reflectorized graphic

Crown unique to 1937

Style of 1938-44, 46-50

Unique to 1945

Style of 1952-62

Style of 1963-64

- The reuse of' 1942 plates to make '44s and the handpainted tin plate of 1945 were part of the War Effort to conserve metal.
- All plates issued since 1982 are valid.

Slogans & Graphics

1937	Crown. This even appeared on the motorcycle plate as shown at left.
1965-date	"AND LABRADOR" was added.
1967	"CANADA CENTENNIAL"
1968	"CANADA'S HAPPY PROVINCE"
1969	"THE MIGHTY CHURCHILL" w/ Electric Bolts
1993-date	"A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE" w/ Viking Ship

- **1937:** Coronation of King George VI.
- **1949:** Newfoundland joins Canada. It was a British Colony before that. Nothing special happened, plate-wise.
- **1965:** Labrador unites with Newfoundland.
- **1967:** 100th Annversary of the Formation of Canada, Confederation. (1867)
- **1969:** Completion of the Churchill Hydroelectric Dam.

Numbering Systems

1920-49	Numeric, 4 digits
1950-72	Numeric, 4 or 5 digits
1973-81	Numeric 4 to 6 digits
1982-date	ABC-123 format.

- The City of St. John's plates from 1920 to '25 used a new thousand series of numbers each year. Less than a 1000 vehicles were registered each year:
  - '20: 1000 series
  - '21: 2000 series
  - '22: 3000 series
  - '23: 4000 series
  - '24: 5000 series
  - '25: 6000 series (expired May '31, 1925).
- Suprisingly, HAA-001 follows AZZ-999 because all the intervening

Style of 1965

Style of 1970-72

Style of 1973-75
(1-001 is the Premier's Plate)

Style of 1976-81

letters are used for non-passenger types.

Typically the lowest numbers went to government officials. Since for many years the numbering started at 1001, that's what the Premier got. In 1973 special plates (white on blue) were made for government officials but also red on white regular series plates with the same number were also made. The officials could use either set, with the unused set kept at the issuing office to prevent mis-use.

Non-passenger types

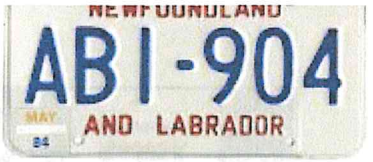
Bxx	Bus
C, Cxx	Commercial
D, Dxx	Dealer
F, Fxx	Farm, Forestry and Mining
Gxx, R	Government
T, Txx	Trailer

1937 and current motorcycle plates

Special Issues

In 1966 a front booster plate was issued with the normal rear plate. It read "Come Home Year". This was to encourage Newfies who had fled their homeland for better opportunities in the big cities, like Toronto, to come back home for a visit. Given how infrequently cars with Newfoundland plates can be seen in Toronto, I wonder how well this scheme worked? Naturally those in Newfoundland don't need to be told this!

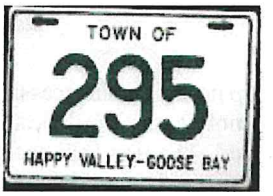
In 1996, this special plate was issued to commemorate the landing of Cabot, an Italian explorer who landed in Newfoundland 5 years after Columbus discovered America. He also explored Nova Scotia, where you find the Cabot Trail on Cape Breton Island.



Style of 1982-92

Style of 1993-date

Happy Valley District



There were no plates for Labrador per-se except for the Happy Valley in the Goose Bay Area. Small plates were issued to the few vehicles that were there from 1954-60. The purpose was to fund road development. It is unlikely any vehicles would have been registered before 1954.

Plates were issued annually from 1954-60. After that, appeared a multi-year undated plate as shown at left.

Sometime in the early to mid 60s, Labrador started to use regular Nfld plates.

Links

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1970-date
- There is one page of contact information on the Motor Registration Division
- John Hayes has some good pictures on Nfld plates, covering many of the non-passenger types.
- PL8S has an interesting page on the early license plates issued in the Happy Valley of Labrador, to fund highway development.

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Last updated Aug 13, 2000

Photo Credits:
ALPCA Archives: Happy Valley '57
Charles Carey: '22, '25, '26
John Hayes: '37
Dave Hollins: '37, '43, '49, '52
Bob McKay: Happy Valley Goose Bay

North West Territories License Plate History

<-- Yukon | HOME | Nunavut -->

Style of 1941-46

Style of 1948-50

Style of 1951-53

Style of 1954-63

Style of 1964-65

How it all began...

Being far up north, and inaccessible to road travel for many years after the advent of the automobile, the Northwest Territories were understandably late in issuing license plates. The first vehicle, a Ford Truck, did not appear in the NWT until 1920, and even as late as 1960, there were no improved roads linking it to the rest of Canada, when the MacKenzie Highway was opened from Edmonton to Yellowknife.

Registration of vehicles was not set up until 1941 when the Territories began issuing sets of license plates. No pre-dated owner-provided plates are known. Only 58 sets of plates were issued the first year, making them very rare today amongst collectors! Harsh weather conditions and few roads meant that registrations remained very low for years. In 1967, Yellowknife became the Territorial captial and some government jobs moved up North.

In 1970 something very exciting happend to NWT license plates, never seen anywhere else in the world. The plates took on the shape of a polar bear, and remain so to this very day! Contrary to what one might think, this is not an idea that came from the government, but rather from a 7th grader! In 1969, the territorial government held a school competition for a winning license plate design to mark the Territory's Centennial in 1970. Klaus Schoene of Sir John Franklin High School in Yellowknife had the winning design, which was a polar bear in colors of the Ice/Snow and Sky, the predominant colors one sees up North much of the year. Wisely, the NWT government decided to stick with this design. Today, the NWT bear plates are very popular among collectors and non-collectors alike.

Physical Characteristics

1941-42	Embossed Steel
1943	Windshield Sticker for '42 base New Registrants received '43 dated plate
1944	Windshield sticker
1945-65	Embossed Steel
1966	Embossed Aluminum, Reflectorized
1967-69	Embossed Aluminum tabs for '66 base Tabs for front plates read "FRONT" Later issues of '66 base are reflectorized steel, undated
1970-date	Embossed Aluminum, Polar Bear Shape.

Style of 1966-69

First Bear shaped plate

Style of 1971-72

Unique to 1973

1977-78

1978	Sticker for '77 base
1980	sticker for '79 base
1982	sticker for '81base
1984-85	stickers for '83 base
1986-date	stickers for '86 base baseplates were made of both aluminum and steel

- The first official issue was 1941. There are dated plates 1929, 30, and 31 known but these are prototypes.
- All plates issued since 1986 are valid.
- From 1966 onwards, seaonal plates were issued at remote areas (probably outside of Yellowknife), at a reduced fee. They expired Oct 31 (you probably couldn't drive past that date anyhow - you'd likely be snowed in). First these were indicated by a blue strip on the right; then when they were issued in the bear shape, they were spray painted orange around the border! In addition, the left front paw was stamped Oct 31. In 1971, the last year for these plates, they were red on white instead of the regular white on blue.

First issue Seasonal plate

Example of 1970 Seasonal plate for Commercial Vehicle

This 1971 seasonal plate looks like part of the regular series - until one takes a look at the color (compare it to the blue/white example at left).
This particular example was for a Public Service Vehicle.

1979-80

1983-85

Style of 1986-date

Current motorcycle plate

Current ATV plate

Slogans & Graphics

1954-69	"CANADA'S NORTHLAND"
1966-69	Territorial Seal
1970-date	Polar Bear Shaped!
1970	"CENTENNIAL"
1973	"RCMP CENTENNIAL"
1986-date	"EXPLORE CANADA'S ARCTIC"

- **1970:** 100th Anniversary of entry into Canada (1870)
- **1973:** 100th Anniversary of the RCMP (1873)

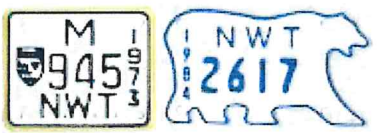
Numbering Systems

- Pure numeric (up to 5 numbers). 5-digits were required for the first time on the '66 base.

Non-passenger types

CV	Commercial Vehicle
D	Dealer
G	Government
RE	Rental
PS	Public Service (usually bus)
T	Trailer

NWT was the last jurisdiction in Canada to register motorcycles, sometime in the late 60s. The first issue was a small black on orange square plate with the NWT crest. It is unknown whether the tabs used were the same as the tabs for the car plate. Today color is what distinguishes the motorcycle from the ATV plate. They are dubbed the "baby bear" and are very popular with collectors.



The two designs of NWT motorcycle plates - note the "baby bear"

Special Issues

These earlier license plates were not official issues as NWT didn't start licensing vehicles until 1941. Rather, they were prototypes made for the Good Roads Campaign. Other dates include '29 and '30.

This officially sanctioned

booster plate was allowed in 1986 when the "Explore Canada's Arctic" permanent bear plate came out. Later, NWT issue a single plate. Pairs were no longer mandatory.

This was issued to NWT delegates at the 1986 World Expo in Vancouver. These plates were numbered serially.

A souvenir plate, similar in design and sold to visitors, read "EXPO 86".

Links

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1975-date.
- In April 1999, the Northwest Territories were divided. The eastern half was named Nunavut (capital Iqaluit, which used to be called Frobisher Bay on Baffin Island) and the western half will remained NWT with Yellowknife as its capital. Both areas want the bear plate. Read this press release

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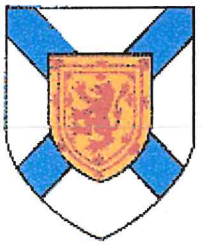
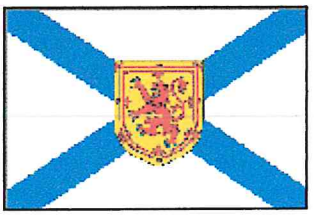
Last updated Aug 13, 2000

Photo Credits:
ALPCA Archives: '41, '48, '31 Good Roads
Brian Husbands: Current m/c plate
Rest are attributed to the Webmaster



NOVA SCOTIA License Plate History

<-- New Brunswick | HOME | PEI -->



One style of 1907-17

How it all began...

The province started registering cars in 1907, prescribing a one-time $5 fee. The motorist was provided with a small aluminum disc carrying the registration number to be mounted on the dashboard. The plates were owner-provided and bore the initials NS after the registration number. The province did not start supplying plates until rather late, so home made plates are rather common. Examples are found made of hand-painted tin or wood, leather with metal numbers. Even a few well-made porcelain plates have surfaced. In 1918 annual registration was required and the province began supplying the plates in pairs.

It is possible the city of Halifax issued small porcelain plates for a one-time fee from about 1905 to '07. An example reading "HALIFAX AUTO REGISTER" has been reported in a Halifax Museum, but this has not been confirmed.

Believe it or not, Nova Scotia motorists were required to drive on the left side of the road until April 15th 1923. They switched, soon after New Brunswick switched on Dec. 1, 1922.

Physical Characteristics

1907-17	Owner provided, usually handpainted on flat tin. Small circular dashboard disc w/ registration number.
1918	Flat Heavy Guage Steel
1919	Flat Tin crimped over Wire Rim
1920	Embossed Steel
1921	Flat Heavy Guage Steel
1922-43	Embossed Steel
1944	Windshield Sticker for '43 plate
1945-51	Embossed Steel
1952	Embossed Aluminum
1953-56	Aluminum Date Strips for '52 base. Some dated '53 bases exist.
1957-59	Embossed Steel
1960 1962 1964	Bi-annual embossed steel bases. Windshield stickers used for '61, '63, '65.
1966 1969	Tri-annual embossed steel bases, valided by plate stickers (1967-68; 1970-71)

Style of 22, 24

Style of 26-27

Style of 1929-31

Style of 1932-37

Style of 1939-40

1972-75	Embossed Steel, validated by plate stickers. Valid until 1986
1976-79	Embossed Steel, Reflectorized; plate stickers. Valid until 1986.
1980-89	Embossed Steel or Aluminum reflectorized base; plate stickers
1989-date	Aluminum graphic reflectorized base, plate stickers.

- In 1943 the owner turned in his '42 plate and received the same number on a '43 plate (remade over the mate to the '42 plate). New registrants in 43 and 44 received '43 plates.
- From 1941-50 NS used some pretty drab pastel colors, but the plates were easy to read.
- Nova Scotia and Manitoba are the only provinces to use all four methods of revalidating license plates:
  a) restamping; b) dated tabs; c) windshield stickers; d) plate stickers
- The first attempt at reflectorization ('76-'80) did not hold up well in the salty and foggy Nova Scotia climate!
- The plates issued from 1972 to 1979 were valid until 1986 as the new alpha numeric plates were phased in. As a result, because of the different sized sticker boxes, two types of stickers had to be made.
- All plates issued since 1980 are valid.

Two shades of yellow on the 1964 plate.
The lighter shade is the rarer variety, and probably was issued in 1965.

Slogans & Graphics

1918-21	Provincial Crest
1972-date	"CANADA'S OCEAN PLAYGROUND"
1989-date	Bluenose graphic

- The bluenose is the same ship that appears on the Canadian 10¢ piece:

Style of 1941, 45

Style of 1942-43 (44)

Style of 1946-49

Style of 1950-51

Style of 1952-56

Style of 1957-64

Numbering Systems

1918-25	Numeric, up to 5 digits
1926-27	Numeric, L or H prefix indicating weight class (L = Light, H = Heavy) Contrary to what one might think, the 'L' and 'H' don't stand for Lunenburg and Halifax respectively.
1928-40	Numeric, 5 digit. First digit indicates county. More than one county may share the same digit. The '28 plates carried the 'H' designation.
1941-51	Numeric, 1.23.45 format. The first digit indicates the county as before.
1952-79	Numeric 1.23.45 or 12.34.56 formats. In earlier years the first digit indicated the county, but this was dropped as registrations increased.
1980-date	ABC-123 format.

- The county system became unworkable as the registration numbers of certain counties (like Halifax) increased over the years.

Non-passenger types

C, CX	Commercial
D, S	Dealer
F, Fx	Farm
T	Trailer

- Today for the most part, non-passenger plates are of different colors than the blue/white passenger plates.

Current motorcycle plate

Special issues

The *Camper* plates are interesting since they are the only plates today to carry the Nova Scotia Crest. Since campers are most likely seen in

Style of 1966-68

Style of 1969-71

Style of 1972-75, valid until 1986

Style of 1976-79, valid until 1986

Style of 1980-88

Style of 1988-89

Style of 1989-date

helps promote tourism for the province.

The G7 Economic Summit for 1995 took place in Halifax. These plates were assigned to the organizers, motorcade and participants.

Links

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1966-date, Vehicle Registration Figures.
- The Registry of Motor Vehicles has very good historical account with excellent photos, written by David Fraser.

Nunavut License Plate History

<-- NWT | HOME | Nfld -->

Nunavut was declared separate from the North West Territories on April 1, 1999.

Passenger

Commercial

Taxi (Public Service)

All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) or off-road dirt bike.

Physical Characteristics

1999 -	Embossed Steel, Polar Bear Shaped, non-reflectorized

- New plates for Nunavut were issued shortly after the separation on April 1, 1999. The earliest dated Nunavut plate would have been 1999, an expiry date later on in the year.
- These plates are copies of the current NWT plate design. It is suspected a new design will be issued some time in the future.
- These plates use the current NWT year and month stickers.

Numbering Systems

- 5 digits, followed by N, starting at 10001N.

Non-passenger types

C	Commercial
D	Dealer
G	Government
P	Public Service
RE	Rental
T	Trailer

- All non-passenger types which exist in NWT are mirrored here. The only difference in the numbering is the 'N' suffix on all plates.
- HAM Radio plates exist with call signs starting with VY0

Sample passenger & motorcycle. These are readily available from the Nunavut DMV.

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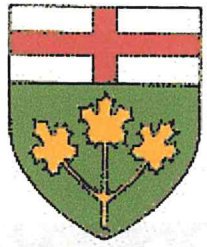

ONTARIO License Plate History

<-- Manitoba | HOME | Québec -->

1903-04 (Dealer)

1905-08 (Rubber)

Only Porcelain year

Style of 1912-16

How it all began...

The province began registering vehicles around May of 1903, the year the Hamilton Auto Club (later to become the Ontario Motor League) was formed. It is said the first two plates were issued to John C. Eaton (of Eaton Department Store fame) for a Winton Touring Car and National Electric Runabout. The plates were provided by the province from the beginning. Therefore, no owner-provided plates are known.

The first plate, designed by a member of the Hamilton Auto Club, was in the shape of a shield, made of leather, with metal house numbers attached. It is identified by a brass insignia. At first it was thought only the brass insignia was officially provided (so the rest was owner provided) but the general consensus now is that the entire plate was provided to the motorist. These plates are very rare, as only 713 were issued, and only a dozen or so are known. During this period, there was no front plate, but instead, the motorist was required to paint his registration number on the front headlights. Pairs began with the issue of the rubber plates in 1906. Later they became annual with the porcelain issue of 1911.

Physical Characteristics

1903-04	Leather w/ brass seal, in shape of a shield
1905-10	Rubber, later versions read "ONTARIO"
1911	Porcelain
1912-16	Flat Steel crimped over Wire Rim.
1918-20	Flat steel, both thin and heavy guage.
1921-43	Embossed Steel
1944	Windshield Sticker for '43 plate
1946-51	Embossed Steel
1952	Windshield Sticker for '51 plate
1953-72	Embossed Steel
1973 **1978** **1982**	Embossed Steel. Permanent base-plates, validated by plate stickers

Style of 1917-19

Similar to 1917-19 Style

Style of 1921

Style of 1923-24

Style of 1922, 25, 26

1994	Aluminum Reflectorized Graphic

- 1911 is Ontario's only porcelain plate. The design and color are the same as the first porcelain plate for BC (1913), Alberta (1912) and Manitoba (1911).
- In 1915, late registrants received cardboard plates because the province ran out of metal plates and there was a steel shortage becaise of the War. The same was done for early 1916 as well.
- The '23 and '24 plates were unique. They had their top and bottom edges crimped back, much like the Quebec plates of 1925-32. The '24 has two distinct die styles.
- The '38 plate had striking colors: orange on turquoise.
- Up to 1954, the length of the plate varied, based on the number of characters. From 1955 onwards, the standard 6"x12" size was adopted.
- The white paint on the numbers of some of the '55 plate mixed with the underlying deep blue, giving them that pinkish color.
- Staggered Registration (month/year) was introduced in 1983.
- All plates issued since 1973 are valid.

During the latter part of 1915 and the first half of 1916, there was a shortage of metal due to the Great War (1914-18). Plates were made of stiff cardboard as an Emergency/Temporary measure.

Slogans & Graphics

1912-20	Provincial Seal
1937-1950 **1952-date**	Crown (design varied over the years, see pictures at left)
1967	"18 CONDEFERATION 67"
1973	"KEEP IT BEAUTIFUL"
1982-date	"YOURS TO DISCOVER"

- **1937:** Coronation of King George VI. The only year 2 crowns were used.
- **1967:** 100th Anniversary of the formation of Canada, Confederation (1867)

Style of 1927-29

Style of 1930

Style of 1931-34

Style of 1935-36

Unique to 1937 (double crown)

Numbering Systems

- 1929	Numeric, up to 6 digits
1930-36	3 to 5 characters One or two letter prefix.
1937-54	3 to 5 characters; "Alphabet-Soup" Single letter may appear in any position or double letter prefix/suffix. Always at least one letter
1955-72	4 to 6 characters. Usually all numeric, but may have prefix or suffix letter. Some letters were reserved for non-passenger use (see below)
1973-85	ABC-123 format
1986-97	123-ABC format
1997 -	ABCD-123 format

- Before 1955, the plate length varied with the serial number.
- From 1955-72, the numbering started at 1000, and when 999*999 was reached, A1*000 would follow.
- In 1973, goverment staff got specific 3 letter prefixes.
- The current series is unique insofar as there are enough combinations to last the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) a couple of centuries!

Non-passenger types

Bx	Bus
BS, SB	School Bus
C	Commercial
CC, CCx	Consular Corps
CD, CDx	Diplomatic Corps
D, MDx	Doctor (prefix only)
F	Reserve passenger series (to 1960) Foreign Affairs (1965-72) Farm (1978 on) Forces (- 1967) as suffix.
M, DLx	Dealer
RTx	Rental (now obsolete)
T	Trailer

Style of 1938-39

Windshield sticker for 1944

Style of 1940-47 (King's Crown)

Style of 1948-50, 52 (smaller crown)

Unique to 1951

X	Station Wagon (Dual Purpose) Combined in 1973 with passenger registrations.
U, V **Y, Z**	Trailer or Quarterly Truck. (Expires Jun, Sep or Dec)

- Unfortunately, Ontario has never made it easy to identify non-passenger types. These are identifed by particular prefix or suffix letters as shown above. Another clue is that non-passengers can expire quarterly (Mar, Jun, Sep or Dec). This is not shown on passenger plates before 1983.
- Up to around 1912, Dealer plates had the Dealer's initials instead of a registration number. This is shown on the left at the top for the 1903-04 first issue.
- As you can see 'F' stood for a lot of things!

The '36 Commercial plates featured a lock-tab on the rear plate. This was an interesting experiment for the more expensive registration. The tab was an anti-theft device which would prevent plate theft (removing the plate would destroy the locktab and plate). It's not clear how effective this was, but certainly they were more expensive to produce, and they did not appear again here, or anywhere else in Canada.

This '39 Doctor's plate, an experiment, was the first Ontario plate to carry reflectorization (beaded numbers). Incidentally reflectorization did not appear again until 1994, fully 55 years later, when all plates started to be made of 3M scotchlight covered aluminum.

In 1944, 1952 Windshield stickers were issued. Vehicles such as motorcycles and trailers, that don't normally have windshields, received dated metal plates. The '44 was black on orange (tiger colored!) and the '52 was a striking black on bright yellow which broke the monotony of blue/black/white of other years. The dealers also received dated metal plates. Examples are shown for each type in 1952:

Windshield sticker for 1952

Dealer

Trailer

Motorcycle

Style of 1953-54 (Queen's Crown)

Style of 1955-61 (New 6x12 format)

Style of 1962-66 (Raised Border)

Unique to 1967

Political license plates

In 1973 when the numbering changed to the ABC-123 system, politicians received plates with special 3-letter prefixes:

Federal		*Provincial*	
CAN	Federal Cabinet	**MPP**	Member of Provincial Parliament
SEN	Members of the Senate	**ONT**	Ontario Provincial Cabinet
MHC	Members of the House of Commons	**SCO**	Supreme Court of Ontario
FCJ	Federal Court Judge	**PJO**	Ontario Provincial judges
FDx	Federally owned vehicles		

- Prior to 1973, the lowest numbers in the series (from 1000 to the 3000 series) were reserved for the VIPs.
- The Prime Minister is eligible CAN-001; the Ontario Premier receives ONT-001.
- All provincially owned vehicles are exempt from annual registration and carry a yellow and black striped sticker dubbed the "bumblebee" sticker.

Special issues used in Ontario event motorcades

Canada Central Exhibition, Ottawa

Royal Visit (1982)

Queen's Visit (1984)

Style of 1968-72

Papal Visit (1984)

Economic G7 Summit, Toronto (1988)

Open Skies Conference, Ottawa (1990)

Style of 1973-78

Ontario Chiefs of Police

QEW 50th Anniversary (1990)

MTO 75th Anniversary (1991)

Style of 1979-82

Ontario has issued quite a few special plates over the years, commemorating specific events. They were used in motorcades, but only recently has it made special issue plates available to the general public. This program, introduced in 1994, features about 40 different plates covering Conservation, Universities, Organizations, Sports and Special Interest themes.

The MTO celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1991 and distributed a special souvenir plate to its employees.

Style of 1983-94

Non passenger types:

Quarterly Truck

Farm

Bus

Style of 1994-97
(note the difference between the number 0 and the letter O).

School Bus

Style of 1997-date

Current motorcycle plate

(note expiry at end of School Year)

Dealer

Station Wagon (Dual Purpose)

Handicap (Recalled 1992)

Pesticides - For use on a sprayer
Issued by the Ministry of Agriculture

Links:

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1973-date, Vehicle Registration Figures.
- The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) provides an informative site on vehicle licensing. Examples of the current graphic plates can be seen here.
- Whyfor Industries provides an informal registry of Ontario vanity plates seen on the road.
- *The Back Bumper* features a nice album of Ontario plates, plus an amusing commentary on the license plate hobby.

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Last Updated Jul 12, 2001

Photo Credits:
ALPCA Archives: '44 & '52 w/s stickers, '15 Cardboard, '39 Doctor
John Hayes: 1903-04 dealer, 1907-10 rubber. '52 Dealer
Alan Bones: CCE '63, Papal '84, Queen's Visit '84, G7 Summit, Open Skies, MTO '75 Anniv.
Wayne Plunkett Collection: RV '02
Steven Silver: '16 Temporary
John Upton: Chiefs of Police (John Rubick Collection)
Jim Williams: '29 Dealer, '76 Pesticides
Rest are attributed to the Webmaster

Ontario Special Issue Graphic Plates

Ontario introduced special graphic license plates to motorists in 1994. The program was kicked off with a choice of nine graphics, the motorist could choose from, for an additional cost of $50. The original eight featured all six of Ontario's sports teams, the Loon (provincial bird), Trillium (provincial flower) and a public service message (Road Safely). Later on, the province opened up the program to clubs, special interest groups and universities; any organization that fell within MTO guidelines and would commit to a minimum order of 100 pairs. Consequently the number ballooned to over 40 different types at the time of this writing!

The layout of these plates all follow a common format. The logo appears on the left, followed by a six-digit serial number of the format 01AB23, where 'AB' are the initials which identify the logo. Generally the first 100 pairs (01AB01 through 02AA00) go to members of the specific organization, and higher numbers are available to the general public.

Sample plates follow several formats, and should not be confused with personalized plates:

- *000SAM* - Used for most issues.
- *GOTEAM* - Major League Sports Teams
- *'TREK96'* - Star Trek
- *7RULES* - Elmer the Safety Elephant

See the loon and trillium examples below. All others can be seen as a pop-up image by clicking on the appropriate link.

Environmental

Loon (Provincial Bird) | **Trillium (Provincial Flower)**

Sports Teams

Toronto Blue Jays old design
Blue Jays new design (Baseball)
Toronto Raptors (NBA)
Toronto Maple Leafs (Hockey)
Toronto Argonauts (Football)
Skydome (home of the Toronto Sports Teams)
Ottawa Senators (Hockey)
Ottawa Rough Riders (Football) - defunct
Hamilton Tiger Cats (Football)

Universities

University of Toronto
King's College
York University
Queen's University
University of Guelph
Wilfred Laurier University
University of Waterloo

Organizations

Boy Scouts	Knights of Columbus	Federation of Snowmobile Clubs	Square Dancers
Girl Guides	Odd Fellows and Rebekahs	Federation of Anglers and Hunters	Radio Amateurs of Canada
Humane Society	Shriners	Canadian Sportsmen's Show	Anishinabek Nation
Lacrosse	Lions Club	Ducks Unlimited	Star Trek

Special Interest / Safety

Road Safety Sign	Don't Drink and Drive	Elmer the Safety Elephant	Canadian Distillers
Canadian Flag	Heart (2 types)	Fire Department	Y2K logo

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Page created Apr. 8, 2001

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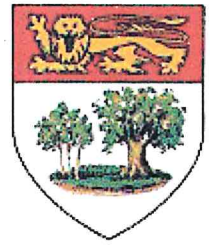
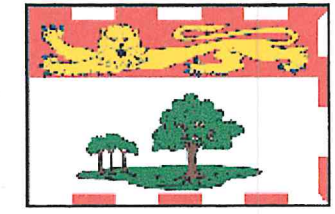
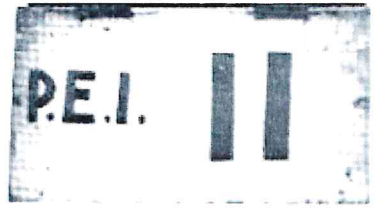


Prince Edward Island License Plate History



<-- Nova Scotia | HOME | Newfoundland -->



1913-14 flat tin

1915-16

1917

1918

How it all began...

The first car appeared on the island in 1905, and raised such a ruckus that a law was passed in 1908 outlawing the operation of any motor vehicle. Automobiles were strictly illegal on PEI until 1913! At that point, owners paid a $5 registration fee and the markers were provided by the owner. The marker carried the registration number and "PEI". The example shown here, #11, was registered to a McLaughlin Touring that was driven across Canada by George A. B. MacDonald - a remarkable feat in those days!

It is not clear when the province started issuing the license plates; actual examples point to around 1915-16 as shown at left. But with so few examples surviving in the absence of any provincial records we probably will never know for sure. Plates were not dated until 1923, and up until that point, were made of various materials and color coded to the year, much like Quebec.

Needless to say, because of the small population, registration figures remained much lower than any other province save for Newfoundland (which didn't become a province until 1949). Early PEI plates are very hard to find today.

Physical Characteristics

1913-14	Owner provided - flat tin w/ wire rim example shown. One dated '13 wire rim plate is known.
1915-16	Flat tin over wire rim, may be owner provided. There is a report of a dated 1916 embossed metal plate.
1917	Fiberboard, undated
1918	Flat tin over wire rim undated
1919	Porcelain, undated
1920-22	Embossed Steel (undated, color coded to year)
1923-43	Embossed Steel (dated)
1944	Windshield Sticker for '43 plate
1945-62	Embossed Steel
1963	Plate Sticker for '62 plate Some new registrants received dated '63 plates.
1964	Embossed Steel (blue on white)
1965	Aluminum reflectorized tab for '64 base. Some new registrants received dated '65 plates
	Embossed Steel white on green base, '66 dated, validated by plate stickers.

1919

1920

1921

1922

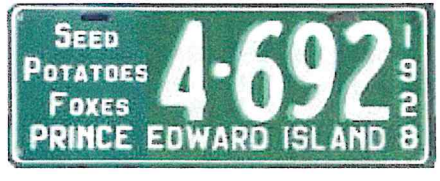
1966-68	Experimental reflectorization on the first 500 pairs.
1969-72	Embossed Steel, blue on beige, '69 dated, plate stickers. Experimental reflectorization on the first 1,00 pairs. plates.
1973-75	Embossed Steel, brick color on white. '73 dated, plate stickers
1976-80	Embossed Steel, white on blue, '76 dated, plate stickers.
1981-88	Embossed Steel reflectorized, plate stickers
1989-92	Embossed Aluminum, reflectorized, plate stickers.
1993-date	Aluminum reflectorized graphic, plate stickers

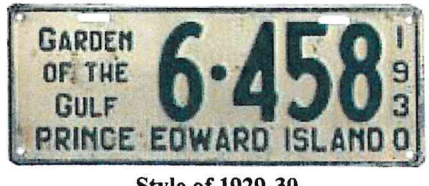
- The 1915 example shown seems to have been remade into a 1916.
- The 1920-22 plates were undated, but the range of digits dictated the year:
  - 1920: 1001-3000
  - 1921: 3001-5000
  - 1922: 5001-
- Since the late 40's, if you lost one of your license plates, the DMV would make you up a new one from a blank plate. In the beginning the numbers were painted on, but in more recent times numbered stickers were used. This practise was abandoned in 1981.

If you look closely, you can see the numbers are really stickers on this replacement plate.

- In 1980 a front plate was no longer required. Therefore a sticker was given out that read "Front plate validation not required". Since 1981, plates have been for the rear only.
- All plates issued since 1981 are valid.

Examples of the early experimental Scotchlite reflectorized plates.
As you can see, they did not hold up well in PEI's harsh climate.





Style of 1929-30

Slogans & Graphics

1928	"SEED POTATOES FOXES"
1929-30	"GARDEN OF THE GULF"
1938-54	Provincial crest (5-sided)
1955-61	Provincial crest (more detailed)
1962-65	"GARDEN OF THE GULF"
1966-72	"GARDEN PROVINCE"
1973-75	"The Place To Be ... In" w/ Father of Confederation figure
1976-80	"SEAT BELTS SAVE"
1977	Sticker features Boy Scouts Jamboree
1981-92	Provincial crest (rounded bottom)
1989	Sticker features Boy Scouts Jamboree
1993-97	'Home of "Anne of Green Gables"' w/ Likeness of Anne and the Green Gables House
1998-date	"Confederation Bridge" w/ Bridge --or-- "Birthplace of Confederation" w/ Gov't House

- **1973:** 100th Anniversary of entry into Confederation (1873)
- One of the more interesting pieces of license plate trivia is that plates for ambulances and hearses were reissued very quickly without a slogan in 1973! When you think about it, such a vehicle is "No place to be in..."

- **1977:** Annual Scout Jamboree was held in PEI.
- **1989:** CJ '89 Means "Canadian Jamboree '89". The Boy Scouts return to PEI.
- The Anne of Green Gables design was dropped because of a copyright issue.
- In 1998 two designs became available to the motorist: the Confederation Bridge and Confederation House. The Bridge plate is the more popular one, and the one supplied by default.

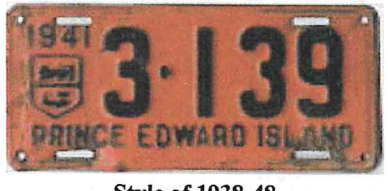
Numbering Systems

1913-19	Numeric, up to 3 digits
1920-49	Numeric, 4 digit
1950	Numeric, 4 or 5 digits

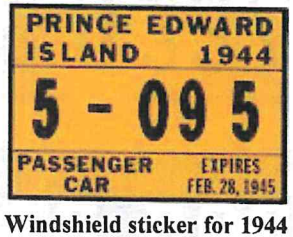
Style of 1931-32

Style of 1933-34

Style of 1935-37



Style of 1938-48



Windshield sticker for 1944

1951-80	Numeric, 5 digits
1981-92	ABC-123 format
1993-96	P1-234, KB-123, QB-C12 formats. First letter denotes county: **K** = Kings, **P** = Prince, **Q** = Queens
1997-date	AB-123 format. County code system dropped.

The ABC-123 format introduced in 1981 is not as simple as one might think. It is too complex to describe here, but suffice it to say they didn't start all plates with 'A' because with the number of registrations, they would have never gotten to 'B'!

Non-passenger types

C, T, Tx, TKx	Commercial Truck
D, Dx	Dealer
F, Fx	Farm
SB	School Bus
SV	Service Vehicle
TR, T	Trailer

Eye-catching graphic motorcycle plates!

Style of 1951-54

Style of 1955-61

Style of 1962-63

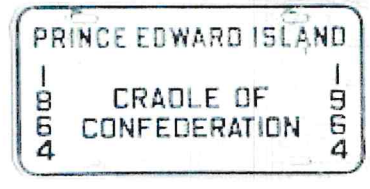
1st PlatesIssued for a DisabledDriver

Prince Edward Island Canada ~ May 1988

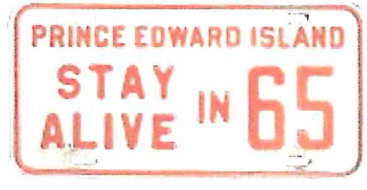
Here is a photo of Gordon Lank, PC, the then Minister of Highways for Prince Edward Island, Canada, presenting the very first license plate for Persons with Disabilities

PEI's first Handicap plate - with an interesting story behind it!

Booster Plates and other special issues



PEI issued this special front booser plate in 1964 to commemorate the province's centennial. This optional plate complements the rear plate of the same color.



In 1965 it was this safety message that some chose to display on the front of their cars.

Links

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1962-date, Vehicle Registration Figures.
- There is a small section on Vehicle Registration under the Government of PEI website.
- Sample license plates may be ordered from The Island Store.

Style of 1964-65

Style of 1966-68

Style of 1969-72

Style of 1973-75

Style of 1976-80

Style of 1981-88

Style of 1989-92

Style of 1993-96

Style of 1997-date

Style of 1997-date

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Last updated Jul 15, 2001

QUEBEC License Plate History

<-- Ontario | HOME | New Brunswick -->

Pre 1911 rubber

Pre 1911 porcelain

1911-12

1913 (Dealer's Tag)

1919

1922

How it all began...

The City of Montreal first began registering cars in 1904, They issued annual porcelain tags, color coded to the year. Unfortunately it is not known if these were dated or read "Montreal" since none are known to have survived. 1906 would have been the last year for these tags because in May of that year, the province took over registration . Plates with a 'Q' prefix were to be provided by the owner. They could be made of whatever material was handy, or even painted directly on the car, as was done by Ucal H. Dandurand who registered the first car, and painted "Q 1" in a red rectangle on the rear of his 1902 DeDion-Bouton. Fortunately, this car, and registration number have been preserved in a museum in Montreal. Later, PQ (Province de Quebec) instead of 'Q' was used for the provincial designation.

When the province started supplying the license plates in 1911, they were made of fiberboard (pressed cardboard), color coded to the year. If it weren't for preserved records, these would be a challenge to date correctly! Interestingly, they used this material up until 1924 and, since the plates weren't supposed to last more than a year, it didn't matter that the material wouldn't hold up over time. Finding these fiberboard plates in decent condition is a challenge. Most are found warped and with little paint remaining.

In the earlier years up to at least 1916, a small dashboard plaque was supplied, with a number that matched the registration plates. Since Quebec is primarily francophone, it is remarkable that these little plaques read "REGISTERED"! These are highly prized as collectibles when accompanied by the matching plates.

Fiberboard Dashboard plaques for 1912, 13 and 16 respectively.

In recent years, Quebec has probably done more with color than any other province. There are some unusual color combinations seldom seen anywhere else such as the orange on blue '52, the black on "slime green" '71, and the "cream background" issues of late 70s. The plates from the 50s on would add a lot of color to a wall, and fortunately for the novice collector, are relatively easy to get.

Physical Characteristics

1906-10	Owner provided (leather, wood, porcelain etc)
1911-24	Fiberboard (pressed cardboard). Plates were color coded instead of dated until 1922
1925-43	Embossed Steel

Style of 1925-29, 31

Style of 1930, 32

Style of 1933-35

Style of 1937-43

Masonite plate of 1944

1944	Masonite
1945-50	Embossed Steel
1951-78	Embossed Aluminumn
1979-82	Embossed Reflectorized Aluminum or steel. Plate stickers used.
1983-date	Current design, reflectorized aluminum. 1992 was the last year for plate stickers, Undated permanent after that.

- The first provincially issued plates appeared in 1911. Before that, plates were supplied by the owner.
- The metal shortage during WW2 forced the province to make the plates once again of fiberboard, this time a more sturdy masonite composite. Many provinces issued windshield stickers.
- The 1971 plate had a unusual metallic green paint color seen nowhere else.
- All plates issued since 1979 are valid.

Two varieties of the 1975 plate.

The latter was issued later in the year when a fire ravaged the Montmagny plant where the Quebec license plates were being made. A new manufacturer had to be found, hence the different color, and crisper dies.
All subsequent plates were also made there.

Slogans & Graphics

1923	Provincial Seal
1950-date	Fleur-de-Lys
1963-66 1968-78	"LA BELLE PROVINCE"
1967	"CONFEDERATION" w/ maple leaf (rear plate) "MONTREAL Expo67" w/fleur de lys (front plate)
1976	Olympic rings
1963-66 1968-77	"LA BELLE PROVINCE"
1978-date	"Je me souviens"

Style of 1945-49

Style of 1950-55

Style of 1956-62

First slogan year

Style of 1964-66

- The Fleur-de-Lys is the provincial flower, and appears on the provincial flag.
- **1967:** Canada's Centennial (1867)
- **1967:** Montreal World Exposition (Expo '67)
- **1976:** Montreal Olympics

Numbering Systems

1910-62	Numeric, up to 6 digits. In the 20s and 30s, an 'H' prefix was used to denoted heavy cars.
1963	Numeric, up to 6 digits. 12-345A format used after 999,999 reached.
1964-73	Numeric, up to 6 digits also 1A-2345 format (letter in second position)
1974-83	123A456 format.
1983-1996	ABC-123 format
1996-date	Numering reversed to 123-ABC

- In 1906 and 07, homemade plates all carried the 'Q' prefix. From 08-14 this was changed to a PQ suffix.
- The early Dealer plates such as the 1913 shown carry the initials of the dealership rather than a serial number. A number '2' indicated the second set of plates issued to that dealer.
- The 'H' prefix stood for Heavy Vehicles in the 1920s and 30s. Later on, from the 50s, the H designated a Hearse or Ambulance.
- In 1963, the number of passenger cars registered exceeded a million for the first time. The registrations over 1,000,000 carry an A suffix rather than a seven digit number!
- The center letter on the 1974-82 plates varied from year to year and was chosen, to some extent, to avoid overlap from one year to the next.
  - **1974: A, E, H**
  - **1975: A, K, N, S, B**
  - **1976: H, L, M, P**
  - **1977: R, S, T, V**
  - **1978: A, B, C, E, F**
  - **1979-82: H, P, L, M, S**

Non-passenger types

A, AU	Bus (Autobus)
AE	School Bus (Autobus - Ecoliers)
C	Tractor
F, Fx	Commercial (Frais)
G, Gx	Government
L, Lx	Delivery (Livraison)
N	Farm

Unique pair for 1967

Style of 1968-71

Style of 1972

Style of 1974-75

Olympics plate of 1976

Style of 1979-81

R	Trailer (Remorque)
T, Tx	Taxi
X	Dealer

There are more non-passenger types in Quebec's history, than any other province in Canada. There are dozens of types, all identified by prefix letter codes of some sort, but otherwise they have the same design as the passenger plate. Anything which does not follow the numbering system described for passenger plates above is probably some sort of non-passenger plate. Unfortunately, unless one has a reference manual, it is almost impossible to guess what many of the codes mean because of the French language. Even then, many codes have no logical explanation. In 1989 the Government slashed at least half of these types and replaced them with general F-series commercial plates.

Special Issues

In the 40s, doctors received this dated front booster plate made of fiberboard. They follow the same color patterns as the regular plates for that year.

Links

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1979-date, Vehicle Registration Figures.
- The registry of motor vehicles is handled by the Société de l'assurance automobile de Québec (in French).
- An impressive chronological history of Quebec plates can be found at Alain Pepin's web-site. Alain is a draughtsman, and has drawn excellent representations of the plates.

Style of 1982-83 (sticker boxes)

Style of 1983-92 (w/ stickers)

Style of 1994 date (no stickers)

Current motorcycle plate

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Last updated Aug 13, 2000

Photo credits:
Jean-Louis Beaudoin: Pre 11 Rubber, Porc; 11-12
ALPCA archives: '10 Porcelain (Joel Finn Collection), '13 Dealer, Dashboard plaques
Jocelyn Doucet: '22
John Hayes: '45
eBay: '46 Doctor's plate

Rest are attributed to the Webmaster

SASKATCHEWAN License Plate History

<-- Alberta | HOME | Manitoba -->

Style of 1912-14

Style of 1915-16

Two styles of 1918

How it all began...

Saskatchewan became a province in 1905 (before that, it was part of the Northwest Territories). Motor vehicle registration was started a year later, on May 26, 1906 when all motor vehicles were registered with the Provincial Secretary for a flat fee of $10. Registrants were required to display their assigned numbers on the back of their vehicles. The markers were owner-provided and typcially made of leather, wood or metal using house numbers, or they were simply painted on the car itself. Unfortunately, no indication of the province was required. Hence these markers are difficult to authenticate today without supporting documentation.

In 1912, when a revised motor vehicle act called for annual registration, the plates were provided by the province. There were four separate registration categories from the start: passenger, livery, garage and motorcycle.

Physical Characteristics

1906-11	Owner-provided
1912-14	Porcelain
1915-16	Flat Steel crimped over Wire Rim
1917-18	Flat Steel Late registrants in 1918 received an embossed steel plate.
1919	Porcelain
1920-22	embossed steel tabs for '19 base. New registrants from 1920-22 got an undated porc. or steel plate to put the tabs on.
1923-43	Embossed Steel In 1958 and 59, the first 1000 plates were reflectorized aluminum.
1944	Windshield Sticker for '43 base.
1945-1969	Embossed Steel
1970-1976	Embossed Steel, Reflectorized
1977-date	Steel or aluminum reflectorized graphic (validated by plate stickers)

- The owner-provided plates usually do *not* carry the abbreviation "SASK".
- Currently, a small sticker indicating the day of the month of expiry is placed in the center.
- All plates issued since 1977 are valid.

Three styles of 1919-22

Style of 1923-25

Style of 1926-27

As an experiment, in '58 and '59, the first 1000 pairs were reflectorized as a test for highway safety. Reflectorization didn't come until 11 years later, in 1970. Perhaps the plates did not hold up, or were too expensive to produce. See the difference below.

Normal

Reflectorized

Besides a slight change in sticker deisgn, the other important difference in these two plates is the small numbered sticker below the wheat stalks on the second plate. As with much of Western Canada, Sask. plates now expire on a specific day of the month as opposed to simply the end. This is indicated by this little sticker. Ontario plates also expire on a specific day of the month (usually the registrant's birthday) however this is not indicated on the plate.

Slogans & Graphics

1919-22	Provincial Seal
1937	"CORONATION YEAR"
1951-54, 1956-59	"WHEAT PROVINCE"
1955	"GOLDEN JUBILEE"
1965	"DIAMOND JUBILEE"
1967	"CANADA CENTENNIAL"
1973	"HOME OF THE RCMP"
1977-date	Shaft of Wheat
1997-date	"Land of Living Skies" front plates have lily sticker

- **1937:** Coronation of King George VI
- **1955:** 50th Anniversary of entry into Confederation (1905)
- **1965:** 60th Anniversary of entry into Confederation (1905)
- **1967:** 100th Anniversary of the formation of Canada
- **1973:** 100th Anniversary of the RCMP (1873)

Numbering Systems

Style of 1931

Style of 1933-36

Unique Slogan for '37

Unique die style for 1938 (similar to Alberta 1944-52)

Style of 1939-42

Windshield Sticker

Style of 1945-47

- 1945	Numeric, up to 5 digits
1946-47	Numeric, up to 5 digits X & Z prefixes to denote numbers over 100,000
1948-76	Numeric, up to 6 digits
1977-97	ABC-123 format
1998 -	123-ABC format

- The premier used to receive plate #1, then later, about 1968, received G1 (1st Government vehicle). It is not known what the premier received when the plates became alphanumeric in 1997.

Non-passenger types

C	Commercial
DR	Dealer
F	Farm
G, X	Government owned vehicle
MD	Doctor
SB	School Bus
T	Trailer

- In 1944 Dealers, Trailers and Motorcycles received a new plate rather than a windshield sticker.
- Today, all vehicles receive the same kind of plate, and a sticker in the lower left corner identifies the vehicle type. (PV stands for passenger vehicle).

The motorcycle plates of 1912-16 are noteworthy because they carry the provincial crest (whereas the normal passenger plates do not):

Current motorcycle plate

The earliest dealer plates say Garage. Some of these carry letters instead of numbers and could be considered vanity plates in their own right:

Two interesting old dealer plates

Style of 1948-50

Porcelain

Flat tin (tab year for passenger)

Style of 1951-54

Sask even had plates for Steam Boilers. This is not the steam boiler of an early steam car, such as the Stanley Steamer as one might assume, but rather the steam boiler within a building. I suppose for safety reasons these had to be licensed and inspected annually and therefore given these little plates.

Unique to 1955

Booster Plates & other items of interest

To promote highway safety in the 50s, some cities issued these booster plates for motorists to display on the front of their car. Other cities include Regina and Saskatoon and there are surely others. This plate shares the same colors as the 1956 so it was probably issued that year. Other years may exist.

Style of 1956-59

This officially sanctioned booster plate for the front of your car was used for the Canada Games that took place in Saskatoon in 1971.

Style of 1960-64

The plate went either below the front or rear license plate plate, but not replacing it. Presumably to encourage native Saskatchewanians to return home, similar to Nfld's "COME HOME YEAR" in 1966.

This is an attachment to your rear license plate, which is a permit to enter Saskatchewan Provincial Parks (SNR = Sask. Nat'l Resources). This one was good for 1933. Other animals were used for other provincial parks and for other years.

Unique to 1965

Links:

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1977-date, Vehicle Registration Figures.

Unique to 1967

Style of 1966, 68, 69

Unique to 1973

Style of 1970-72, 73-74

Style of 1977-97

Style of 1998-date

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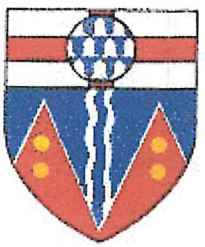
Last updated Oct 11, 2000

Photo Credits:
ALPCA Archives: '44, '13 m/c,
eBay: '24, '29, '97 m/c
Alan Betts: '22s
Dave Hollins: '30, '31
Roger Reid: '19
Eric Taylor: '13 garage, '21 Dealer
Dana Tumback: '17, '18 emb, 28



YUKON License Plate History

<-- BC | HOME | NWT -->

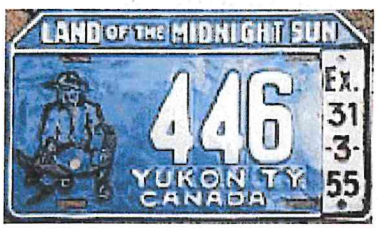
First issue, handpainted.

Style of 1917-22

Style of 1924-30

Style of 1931-38

Style of 1939-50



Style of 3/53 - 3/55

How it all began...

Even though Yukon is in the remote North, vehicle registrations were set up suprisingly early. This is probably due to the gold-rush (the *Klondike*) which started at the end of the 19th century. The Yukon was settled by many, who came to seek their fortune in gold. Dawson City was supposedly the largest city west of Winnipeg at one point! Today, much of this boom has gone bust, as many of these "get rich quick" overnight operations folded. As a result, there are a lot of isolated ghost towns not connected by any modern routes.

The Yukon first started registration in 1914, using flat tin plates which displayed the year of *issue* rather than the year of *expiry*. The plates were handpainted using a stencil on flat tin and probably all done by the same signpainter. They were intended to be permanent until replaced by the annual embossed license plates provided by the territory starting in 1924. All these early plates carried "YT" for Yukon Territory.

An interesting design came out in 1952 with the miner "Yukon Sam" panning for gold, complete with a gold nugget in the pan! This wasn't real gold, of course, but rather a dab of gold paint, applied by hand. The "Land of the Midnight Sun" has provided us with a colorful license plate history as you can see on the far left. The tri-color styles (where the miner is of a different color from the numbers) are very popular with collectors.

Physical Characteristics

1914-23	Flat Steel, handpainted
1924-52	Embossed Steel, no dated plate for '51.
1953	Embossed steel, clipped upper corners
1954, 55	Date strips for '53 base New registrants in '55 received '55 dated plate.
1955-79	Embossed steel
1980-81	Embossed steel green/white base validated by plate stickers
1982-85	Embossed Steel undated red/white base, plate stickers
1986-90	Embossed Reflectorized Steel black/beige, plate stickers
1991-date	Aluminum reflectorized graphic, plate stickers.

- Only the current graphic plate issued since 1991 is valid.

Slogans & Graphics

1953-date	Yukon Sam (Picture of Miner)
1953-70	"LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN"

Style of 1955-60, 62 (tri-color)

Style of 1961, 63-70 (two color)

Style of 1971-77

Style of 1982-85

1971-77	"HOME OF THE KLONDIKE"
1978-date	"THE KLONDIKE"

- Yukon Sam is complete with a dab of gold paint in his pan, representing a gold nugget.

Numbering Systems

1914-75	Numeric, up to 4 digits.
1976-77	A-123 format. Prefix letter indicates geographical region.
1978-81	AB-12 format
1982-90	ABC-1 (3 alpha one numeric!)
1991-date	ABC-12 format

- From 1976-81, the prefix letter denotes the geographic region issuing office.

Non-passenger types

D	Dealer
FT	Freight Truck
FGx, G	Government
PSV	Public Service Vehicle
RES	Restricted
T	Truck
RAx, UD	U-Drive (Rental)

- Non passenger types usually do not carry the Yukon Miner graphic as illustrated by these plates:

Compare this boring design with the passenger plate.

The Yukon had a permanent multi-year plate for territorial government vehicles.

Special Issues

This officially issued booster plate issued in 1992 commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Canada Highway linking BC, Yukon and Alaska. This was quite a feat in 1942 when major road construction up North

Style of 1986-90

was almost unheard of. They were also issued for BC & Yukon.

Shown here are two examples. The first is a general issue, the other is specific to the Yukon.

Style of 1991-date

Links

- Elsewhere on this site: Stickers on plates 1980-date.
- The Yukon Motor Vehicles Section provides an informative chronological history of Yukon license plates, complete with photos.

current motorcycle plate

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Last Updated Aug 13, 2000

Photo Credits:

Ken Stratton: '27
ALPCA Archives: '14, '12, '33, '55; dom. gov.
eBay: '49, '59 truck
Mike Liscio: '56
Paul Wingert: '97 m/c

Rest are attributed to the Webmaster

Manufacture of License Plates

Variations | Prototypes | Errors

In order to fully appreciate license plates, it helps to understand the manufacturing process. This will give you further insight into how variations in manufacture come about. It also helps to explain how error plates may occur and why certain prototype plates are made.

History of manufacture

In the beginning when plates were owner provided, they were by and large hand-made. They were often house numbers attached to a slab of leather or rubber, or perhaps numbers hand painted on tin. Needless to say these were rather crude looking, and easily faked.

Some examples of early hand-made license plates: leather, rubber and tin.

When the provinces started issuing the license plates, they made them in these following ways:

- Porcelain fired on heavy steel. These tended to chip easily.
- Tin stretched over a wire rim. The wire rim was supposed to give the plate strength, as the tin itself was flimsy. The design and numbers were silk screened on the flat tin.
- Heavy guage tin with the design and numbers painted on. These were cheaper and easier to produce than the wire rim plates.
- Fiberboard. This was a cheap way of producing plates, but they didn't last.

Early plates made of porcelain, tin w/ wire rim, heavy guage steel and fiberboard

By the 1920s, most provinces were stamping out plates of steel with the numbers and design embossed in. These were easily mass produced and were withstood wear and tear. If the plate became hard to read, it could simply be repainted; in the earlier designs the number could be lost. This method remained essentially unchanged for decades, almost to this day.

When plates rusted, at least the numbers, year, and place-name were not lost on the embossed plate.

After 50 years, these plates were still made basically the same way.

Today, most plates are made of light aluminum laminated with a reflectorized coating. The reflectorized sheeting is a plastic adhesive called Scotchlite™, a 3M product. Since the design is silk-screened onto the sheeting, elaborate designs and graphics can be incorporated. The numbers are still embossed and painted afterwards.

In the future, we may see more plates laminated with the serial numbers directly silkscreened onto the plate. This technology, perfected by a German company, Azon-Uscht, is already being used to make some modern US graphic plates. Soon we will probably see its use in Canada.

With modern silk-screening techniques, many pretty designs are possible.

Let us take a journey through the modern manufacturing process...

At the beginning, you will find a huge roll of metal which is the material the license plates will be made of. If applicable, the Scotchlite™ adhesive containing the background design is applied by a laminating machine. The blanks in the shape of a license plate are cut out from this strip of metal and stacked up beside the stamping machine. The bolt holes are also punched out at this time.

The stamping machine or press is the most important part of the process. At this point the serial number is embossed into the plate, as well as other parts of the design such as the border, jurisdiction and year. This is usually a two stage process with the numbers embossed first, followed by the border and the rest of the design. The press contains a template of the license plate where serial numbered dies can be placed in various positions. The jurisdiction, year, slogan and other features that remain the same, are on dies fixed into position on another template. Only the serial number will change from plate to plate and therefore these dies must be quickly interchangeable. If pairs are being made, two blanks are fed into the machine to be stamped at once.

Steps to manufacture: embossing the blank, then painting background and foreground.

The coating process is the next step where the embossed parts of the design must be painted. The stamped out plates are fed into a set of rollers which applies paint to all raised surfaces. A foreground color is chosen that offers good contrast to the background such as black on white or blue on white. Red/Black, White/Yellow for example would offer poor contrast.

The final processes ensure a quality product. The plates roll along a conveyor belt through a series of ovens to dry and cure the paint. They arrive at the shipping area where they are quality inspected and bundled up by sealing them in bags or envelopes. Once boxed, they are shipped to a warehouse, from which they are distributed to the various issuing offices.

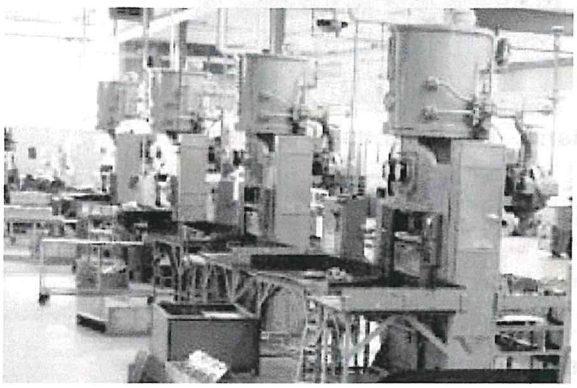
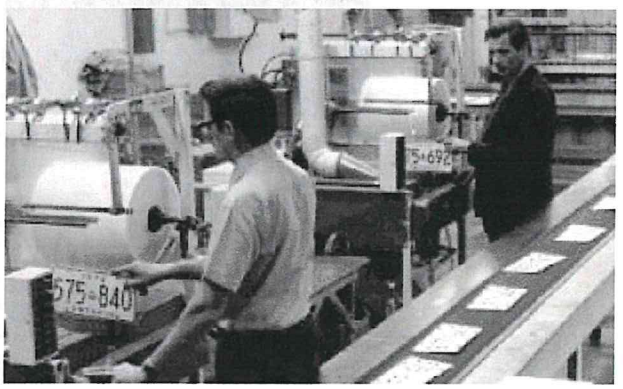


Plate stamping machines.



Bagging the final product.

Later on, we shall discuss variations, errors and prototypes in manufacturing license plates.

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Last Updated Mar 7, 2000

Photo Credits:

Manufacturing plant floor: Courtesy of Ministry of Transport, Ontario, 1972.

ALPCA archives: BC leather, Yukon tin.

John Hayes: Ontario rubber

Paul Wingert: Sask porcelain

Rest are attributed to the webmaster.

Variations in Manufacture:

If a shop is retooled with new machinery or if a different manufacturer is chosen to make the plates, different styles of the same license plate may result. This is particularly common for bases that have been in use for a while. The most striking example is the Alberta Wild Rose Country plate in use since the early 80s. Because several manufacturers were used during their lifetime, many different types have evolved.

The most common types include the following variations:

- **Dies:** The way the serial numbers are shaped is called the *die style*. The following illustrates two different die styles on Ontario and Alberta plates:

Two die style of the 1938 Ontario. The latter uses '39 dies.

Two (of many) distinct die styles used on this base.

In earlier days, sometimes the dies were made narrower to fit more numbers on the plate. A good example is the 1919 Ontario shown below.

Notice the thinner dies used when they made 6-digit plates.

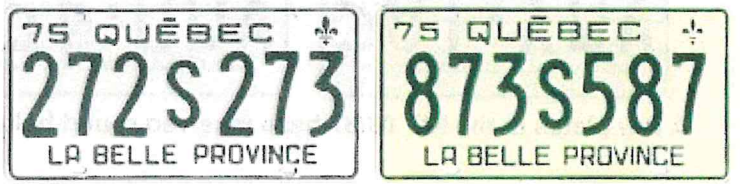
- **Size:** Since 1957, North American license plates have been standardized to a 6" x 12" size (with the exception of the NWT polar bear plate). Before that, size would have varied from province to province. However some provinces adopted the 6 x 12 standard before 1957. In the earlier years, to save metal, it was common practice to emboss shorter serial numbers on shorter plates. These are sometimes called "shorties", as the following example illustrates:

The plate on the right is the normal (most common) size.

- **Color/Tint:** If the paint runs out or is changed mid way through a run, the plates after the

changeover may take on a slightly different hue if the match isn't exact. Notable examples are the '64 NS and '75 Quebec:

The latter plate was made near the end of the run (most likely late in '65 as the '64 plate was used for 2 years). They were probably getting ready to make the '66 plates which used this lighter shade of yellow.



The last of the '75 Quebec plates took on this greenish hue.

- **Material:** Two common materials used in making license plates are steel, and more recently, aluminum. Aluminum has the advantage that it isn't rust-prone but it is more expensive. Nowadays, most plates are made of aluminum as they are meant to last several years. Sometimes a switch from one metal to the other will be done mid-way in a run if the supply runs out and needs to be reordered. Another common switch is to add reflectorization but then the plate design is usually changed as well.

The difference in the metal of these two Nfld plates isn't apparent in this picture until you turn them over and observe the corrosion on the steel base.

- **Layout:** Sometimes the location of the date, slogan or place name may be changed (or eliminated altogether). Perhaps the most notable example was the elimination of the slogan "The Place to Be In..." on the 1973 Ambulance/Hearse plates in PEI! A common example is the elimination of the embossed date on a multi-year plate, or the addition of sticker boxes as illustrated below:

In 1978 Ontario eliminated the year from its multi-year plates (which had become redundant by then). Notice the modification in the sticker box as well.

Around 1981, sticker boxes

were added to the '79 Quebec permanent plate.

- **Bolt-hole:** A very subtle difference. The size of the bolt holes may be changed in the stamping equipment resulting in something like this:

A few plates in the NB 03/87 base received round bolt-holes.

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Last Updated Feb 10, 2000

Photo Credits:

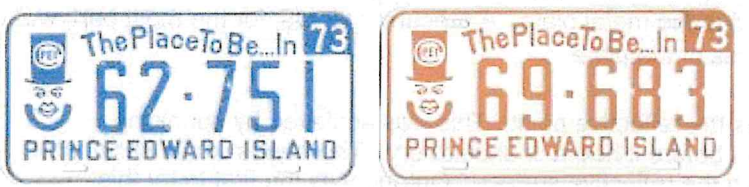
All are attributed to the webmaster.

Prototypes:

Prototype plates, often called test plates, are manufactured to try out a new idea. This may be a completely new plate design, manufacturing technique, or a proposed change to an existing design. A lot goes into manufacturing license plates, and nothing helps the thought process along more than having some prototypes on file to compare various designs and techniques. Prototype plates usually resemble the final product, but important differences can include:

Color Trials

In order to decide what colors to ultimately use, different color combinations are often tried out. This means taking the proposed design and painting it with various color combinations. This helps determine what color combinations are easy to read, and which are not. These plates are kept on file for future reference in cases where colors are changed frequently such as the Quebec plates of the 60s and 70s.



Color trial for 1973 PEI. The color on the right was the one chosen for the passenger plates of that year.

Ontario trial for 1946. Instead of settling on the striking yellow of 1940, the people who decide these things chose the boring white on black. These became the colors of choice for years to come. Incidentally the non-passenger plates of 1952 did use the yellow.

Design trials

If manufacturers are to bid on a contract to provide license plates for the Province, they usually have to submit a few examples of the plates they propose to make. It is likely the 1921 Alberta plate shown here is a manufacturer's sample, the same manufacturer that made the 1920 Ontario plates because the metal base and font for the numbers are identical. Compare them below. In the end a different manufacturer was chosen as the 1921 Alberta plates are embossed, with "ALTA" and "1921" on the right.

Note the similarities in manufacture (bolt holes, number dies).

Several candidate designs were no doubt considered for a radically designed plate such as the Quebec Expo67 / Confederation pair. These are all considered prototypes:

The first two zeros on the blue prototype are reflectorized - that's why they look brighter. Looks like they forgot to put the province name on that second design!

With all the new graphic plates that are appearing on the roads nowadays, no doubt various designs were considered before making a choice. For every new plate, you can usually assume it was only one of many possible designs considered.

Reflectorization - an early experiment

A reflectorized plate, makes it easier to read at night against a bright light. Not to mention making the car itself easier to spot at night with something reflective on the back bumper. The modern type of reflectorization in common use today is a strip of Scotchlite™ (3M product) adhesive, sometimes with a designed screened in, laminated to the metal plate. A precursor to this, for the most part, was reflectorized paint on the raised surfaces of the plate.

The first attempt at reflectorization was the reflective paint. This was achieved by sprinkling microscopic glass beads onto the paint before it had a chance to dry. The beads would stick onto the paint, providing a rough texture and the reflective surface. Ontario was the first to try this method, on the 1939 Doctor's plates, however it was a trial basis only as no other Ontario plate was made this way. Only Alberta put this method to general use on its plates in the 50s and from the mid 60s to mid 70s. Prototypes of this genre were made in PEI in 1966. Today it is not very popular as the glass-beaded paint has a tendency to get dirty or the glass beads themselves wear off.

This Ontario Doctor's plate was Canada's first attempt at reflectorization

The Scotchlite reflectorization method came later as it was first introduced in 1958 on a trial basis. There were a few
technical problems in those early years, mainly getting the Scotchlite to adhere properly to the metal base. Moisture had a tendency to get under the adhesive causing unsightly rust and corrosion within a year or two of normal use. In order to refine the manufacturing technique, some provinces made test plates to be distributed to some registrants. Others made one or two examples and used them on government owned cars to see how they would weather over the year. Today, most plates are made using this reflective adhesive, proving itself as the superior technology.

The first attempt at Scotchlite reflectorization in Canada occurred when Saskatchewan made their first 1,000 plates in '58 and '59 reflective. They were satisfactory in their salt-free climate but since they were annual it is difficult to say how they might have survived over several years. Because of the additional costs, they decided not to issue reflective plates on a general basis until 1970.

PEI made the first attempt at making a multi-year reflective plate. In 1966 and 1969 the first 1,000 plates were made reflective as an experiment. Unfortunately they did not hold up well at all in PEI's salty air, as this example illustrates. You can see where moisture had gotten under the Scotchlite and caused serious corrosion. A switch to aluminum might have been more successful, but no doubt would have added to the cost of production.

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Last Updated Mar 7, 2000

Photo Credits:

Paul Wingert: '58 Sask refl.
eBay: '58 Sask
ALPCA archives: '39 Doctor

Rest are attributed to the webmaster.

Errors in Manufacture:

Error plates are those with manufacturing flaws. These plates slip through the inspection process and sometimes actually get issued. In most cases, however, the error is usually caught and the plate is rejected. If it isn't destroyed, it can be quite a collector's item, depending on the type of error.

The most common errors are:

Inverts

- *Partial Invert:* When the license plate numbers are stamped out, one of the dies may be put in upside-down resulting in a license plate with one character inverted with respect to the rest. This is glaringly obvious with most numbers and letters. However this may not be at all obvious with the numbers '9' '6' and '0', or the letters 'X' and 'I' for example. Inversion may be slightly apparent with other dies, for example the numbers '8' and '1'.

You have to look closely, but the first '8' is inverted on these motorcycle plates. This is a common error.

- *Full Invert:* Sometimes a blank will be inserted upside-down into the die stamping maching resulting in a serial number that is upside-down with respect to the background (or rest of the plate).

A full invert which is glaringly obvious. Notice the crown covered up by the 'T'. It's amazing it was actually used!

This second motorcycle plate is actually an invert. Look at the bottom two mounting holes. They are supposed to be on the bottom (for front fender mounting) but the second one of this pair was stamped upside down. cle plate is actually an invert.

Multiple plates

Care must be taken not to stamp out more than a pair with the same number (or a single if they are being made for a jurisdiction which only uses a rear plate). Occasionally one forgets to switch the dies, or two blanks are fed into the machine at once by mistake. Whatever the reason, multiple examples with the same serial number can be found such as a "Three of a kind".

Color errors

If different types of plates are being manufactured on the same day, often different colors may be used for

the various types being made. In these cases a plate may be painted with the wrong colors. Other common errors are color inversions (reverse of the correct color). For example, the numbers are painted red on a white background, instead of white on red.

Sometimes a plate is fed upside down into the roller painting machine. The result is that paint applied to the back of the plate instead of the front, making it look debossed instead of embossed or the lettering backwards.

This 1987 Ontario plate looks ordinary, until you turn it over.

Occasionally a plate will be stamped but never fed through the paint rollers. This results in a plate without the numbers painted.

Others

- Crooked letters (not properly aligned in the stamping machine).
- Fingerprints caused by handling the plates before the paint is dry.
- Misplaced dividers, such a a dot in the wrong spot.
- A missing feature on the plate, if the die used to stamp out that feature (such as the Crown on Ontario plates) was not inserted into the stamping machine.

A defect in the white paint on some of the 1955 Ontario plates, caused it to run into the dark blue background. The result is a pinkish hue.

The same happened with these 1973 Ontario motorcycle plates. Notice how the numbers in the second plate take on a bluish hue.

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Last Updated Feb 10, 2000

Photo Credits:

John Hayes / Dave Steckley: 7-digit Ontario invert

Rest are attributed to the webmaster.

(Wouldn't it be nice to show other provinces besides Ontario?)

Stickers on Canadian License Plates

Stickers are used to extend the registration time period of a license plate. Rather than provide the motorists with new license plates each year, it is more economical to validate their current plates with stickers. The license plates would be replaced only when they become worn out, rusted or faded. The sticker indicates the date of expiry. The multi-year license plate without any stickers is called a ***base-plate.*** Here are the dates when each province started issuing multi-year baseplates:

British Columbia (1970)	Alberta (1973)
Saskatchewan (1977 - date)	Manitoba (1971)
Ontario (1973)	Quebec (1979)
New Brunswick (1962)	Nova Scotia (1966)
Prince Edward Island (1962)	Newfoundland (1970)
NWT (1975)	Yukon (1980)

Nunavut (1999)

In earlier days, plates normally expired at the end of the calendar or fiscal year. This resulted in long lineups at the licensing offices because people would wait until the last minute to renew their registration. To ease the strain, many provinces introduced the notion of ***staggered registration*** meaning that not all motorists' license plates came up for renewal at the same time. In most cases, a month of the year was chosen, based on some criteria such as the motorist's birthday, his/her last name, or simply when the car was registered for the first time. The year and month may appear together on the same sticker or separate month and year stickers may be printed. Some provinces have even gone further by specifying the day of the month.

Tabs and windshield stickers for the most part were the forerunners to the license plate sticker system. These have been covered in the passenger runs. Under this heading, we give coverage for passenger plates only as non-passenger types are beyond the scope of this website.

For each province we have listed all the base-plates which receive stickers. In each case, by use of a diagram, we tell the reader where the stickers are to be placed on the base-plate. It is also important to note whether the plates were issued as singles or in pairs and if stickers were required on both plates. Today, most provinces only require a sticker on the rear plate for enforcement.

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<<< BC | Alberta (1973 - date) | Sask >>>

From 1973 to 1993, Alberta has issued plates in pairs with a sticker for the rear plate only.

Since 1995 there has been a single plate only.

1975-84

Even Years

Odd Years (+76)

No sticker for 1975

There was no '77 dated sticker since one expiring in March of 1978 was issued instead. Stickers expiring in March of the following year were issued until 1984. Then an interim sticker expiring Jun 30, 1984 was issued to keep these plates valid until the following graphic plates became available. The 1983 stickers were made of foil and did not hold up well.

76	-	Mar78	Mar79	Mar80
Mar81	Mar82	Mar83	Mar84	Jun84

1984-date

The earliest date is Oct, 1984.

Even Years

Odd Years

84	85	86	87	88
89	90	91	92	93
94	95	96	97	98
99	2000			

Special Sticker for the Calgary Olympics

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<<< Yukon | British Columbia (1970 - date) | Alta >>>

Since 1970 BC has issued plates in pairs with a sticker for the rear plate only.

1970-72

70	71	72

1973-78

No sticker was issued for 1973

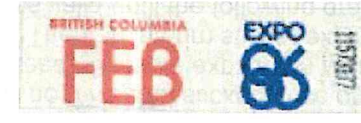
74	75	76	77	78

1979-86

No sticker for 1979

Staggered registration began with stickers that expired in March, 1980. Large easy to read stickers were used. A special red white and blue sticker was issued for Expo 86.

Mar80	Jan81	Jan82
Jan83	Jan84	Jan85



In 1996 the original stickers were black and white but it was found they could be reproduced easily with a photocopier. Later in the year, for November and December, they were made pink on white.

In 1994 a small additional black and white sticker indicating the day of the month of expiry was added above the flag graphic.

Jan86	Jan87	Jan88	Jan89	Jan90
Jan91	Jan92	Jan93	Jan94	Jan95

1986-date

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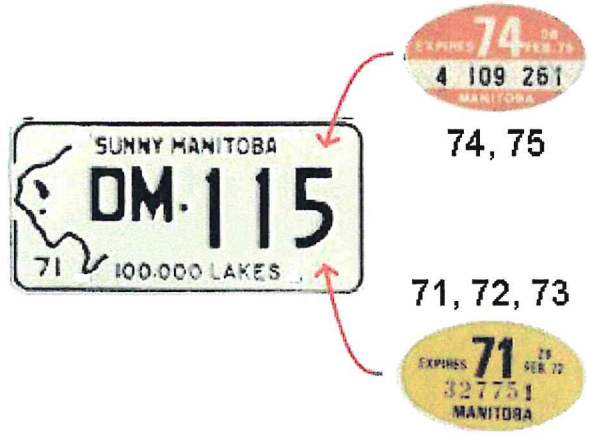
<<< Sask | Manitoba (1971 - date) | Ont >>>

1971-75



74, 75

71, 72, 73

Since 1971, Manitoba has issued plates in pairs and a sticker for the rear plate only.

These unusual oval stickers expired at the end of February the following year (indicated in small print). In 1971 and 1972 the license plate number sometimes appeared on the stickers.

The 1971 sticker was a bit different in that it was issued to show that the car insurance had been paid (the plate already carried the 1971 date). In 1972 someone was pulled over for using a Chiquita banana sticker in place of the normal '72 one. At a distance the two stickers are hard to tell apart and he had many fooled for a while.

71	72	73	74	75

1976-82

Even Years **Odd Years**

77	**78**	79	
80	81	82	

1983-97

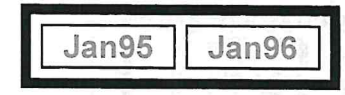
Even Years **Odd Years**

84	85	86	87
88	89	90	**91**
92	93	94	

No sticker was issued for 1983.

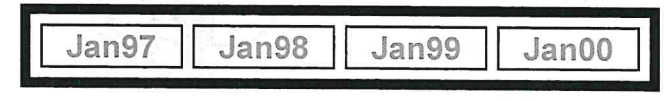
Manitoba was the last province to introduce staggered registration. Up until that point, all stickers expired at the end of Feb (of the following year).

When staggered registration was introduced, the day of the month was placed in the left hand sticker box.



1997-date

Separate navels are provided for the day and month stickers as shown in the diagram. This particular plate expired July 6, 1998.



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<<< Qué | New Brunswick (1962 - date) | NS >>>

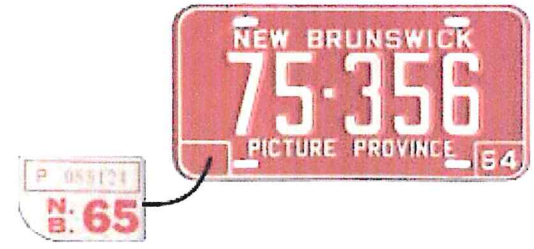
NB was the first province, along with PEI to introduce validation stickers with a dark green on black 1963 sticker on the 1962 baseplate shown. Following that, are a series of two and three-year baseplates.

63	65	67	68

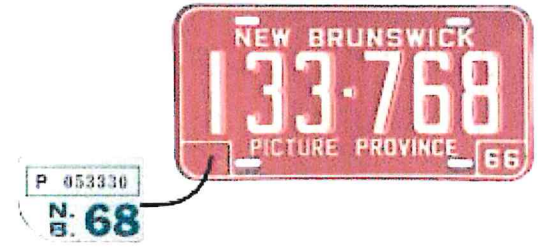
Since 1969, NB plates were issued in pairs with stickers on the front and rear.

70	71	73
74	76	77

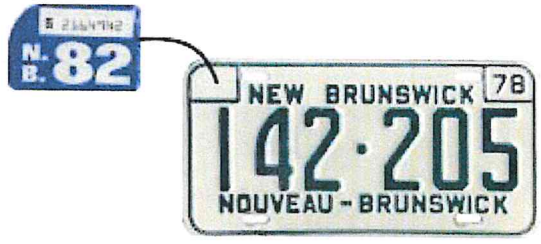
1978-85



From 1962 through 1968 only a rear plate was issued.



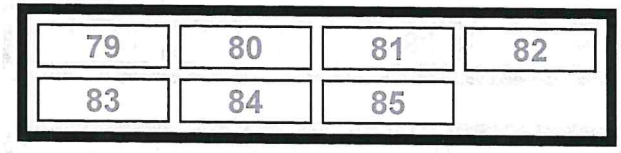
The 1981 stickers were made of foil and did not hold up well. They had a tendency to shrivel or peel off.



1987-92

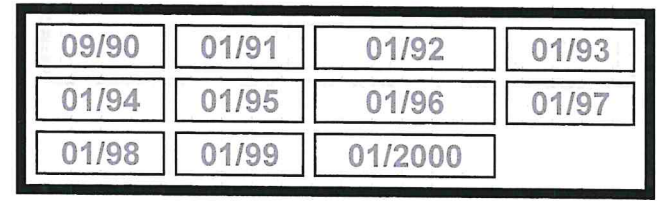
No sticker was issued for 03/87 since this date was screened directly onto the license plate.

1991-date



The expiration month was changed to March, and a new plate was redesigned for 1986. These plates were dated 03/87 meaning no 1986 stickers were made. Despite this plate having two sticker boxes, all stickers were made to "fit" the upper right sticker box. However many motorists chose to put these stickers on the other side as well.

NB moved to staggered registration in mid 1990. This means stickers exist both for March, and other months after that. The later month stickers of that year are a different color.



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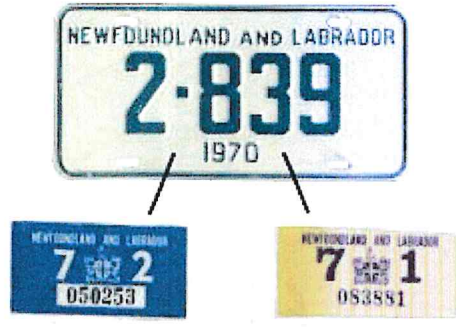
<<< Nunavut | Newfoundland (1970 - date) | PEI >>>

Nfld plates were always issued in pairs with stickers on the front and rear.



1976-81

77	78	79	80	81

1982-92

Staggered registration was introduced at the end of 1981 with stickers expiring in June, 1982. From 1982 to 1984 each month of the year was color coded.

From this series forward, stickers may be placed in either corner.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr?
May	Jun	Jul	Aug?
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

Jun82	Jan83	Jan84	Jan85

Jan86	Jan87	**Jan88**	Jan89
Jan90	Jan91	Jan92	Jan93

1994-date

A barcode for optical scanning was introduced on the 1999 stickers. It encodes the serial number of the sticker (not the plate) but presumably, when scanned with a laser gun, may be traced back to whomever the vehicle was registered to.

Jan94	Jan95	Jan96	**Jan97**
Jan98	**Jan99**	Jan00	

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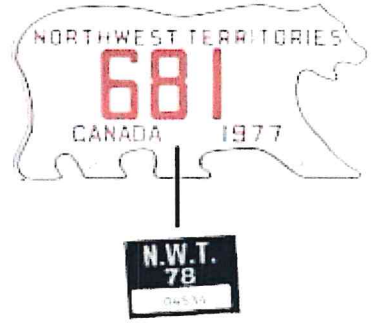
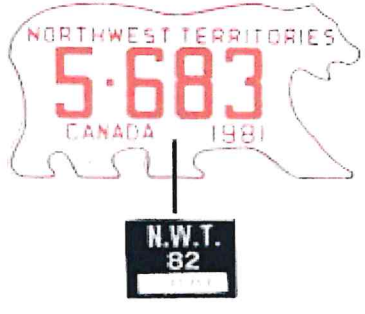
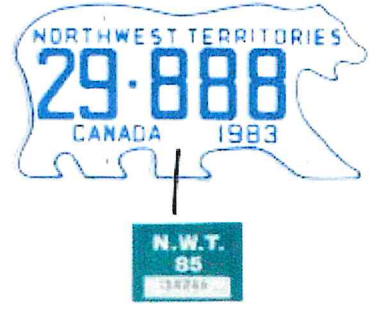
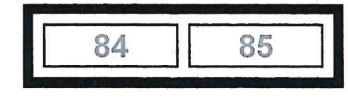
<<< Yukon | Northwest Territories (1975 - date) | Nunavut >>>





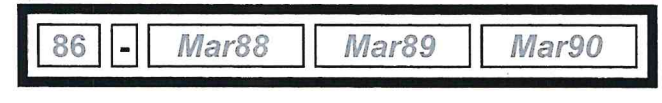


1983-85



1986-90

The expiry was changed to the end of March in 1988. Therefore, no 1987 sticker was issued. There are only stickers on the rear plate in NWT.



Staggered registration was introduced after March 1990 with a separate black on yellow month sticker. Notice the unusual placement of these stickers - on the bear's paws!

1990-date

90	91	92	93
94	95	96	97
98	99	00	

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<<< NB | Nova Scotia (1966 - date) | PEI >>>

Up until 1997 when Nova Scotia went to a single plate, plates were issued in pairs with stickers on the front and rear.

67	68	Dec70	Dec71

1972-79 (& 1980-86)

All stickers up until 1979 expired in December.

No sticker was issued for 1972

Dec73	Dec74	Dec75	Dec76
Dec77	Dec78	Dec79	

These plates were in use until 1986. A smaller version of the sticker was specially issued because of the smaller sticker boxes. The colors are shown below. Having two series of stickers was rather inconvenient. This, and the fact that these plates were quickly becoming worn out and faded led to their retirement.

Staggered registration was introduced in 1979, starting with Jun 1980 stickers.

Jun80	Jan81	Jan82	Jan83	Jan84

1980-date

Jan85	Jan86	Jan87	Jan88	Jan89
Jan90	Jan91	Jan92	Jan93	Jan94
Jan95	Jan96	Jan97	Jan98	Jan99
Jan00				

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<<< NWT | Nunavut (1999 - date) | Nfld >>>

1999 - date

Nunavut was declared separate from the NWT on April 1, 1999. The license plates were issued shortly after this date. The same registration system as the NWT is used. The stickers used are the same as those on NWT plates.

The earliest recorded plate expiration is October, 1999.

Rear plate only.

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Special thanks to Andrew Osborne for providing the picture of the Nunavut plate.

<<< Man | Ontario (1973 - date) | Qué >>>

1973-82

1983-date

Since 1973, Ontario has issued plates in pairs with a sticker for the rear plate only.

1974	1975	1976
1977	1978	1979
80	81	82

Ontario moved to staggered registration in 1983. The month has appeared since June, 1983. The stickers are color coded by quarter (Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, Jul-Sep, Oct-Dec).

-	*83Jun*	83Jul	83Oct
Jan84	Apr84	Jul84	Oct84
85Jan	85Apr	85Jul	85Oct
Jan86	Apr86	Jul86	Oct86
87Jan	87Apr	87Jul	87Oct
Jan88	Apr88	Jul88	Oct88
89Jan	89Apr	89Jul	89Oct
Jan90	Apr90	Jul90	Oct90
91Jan	91Apr	91Jul	91Oct
Jan92	Apr92	Jul92	Oct92
93Jan	93Apr	93Jul	93Oct
Jan94	Apr94	Jul94	Oct94
95Jan	95Apr	95Jul	95Oct
Jan96	Apr96	Jul96	Oct96
97Jan	97Apr	97Jul	97Oct
Jan98	Apr98	Jul98	Oct98
99Jan	99Apr	99Jul	99Oct
Jan00	Apr00	Jul00	Oct00

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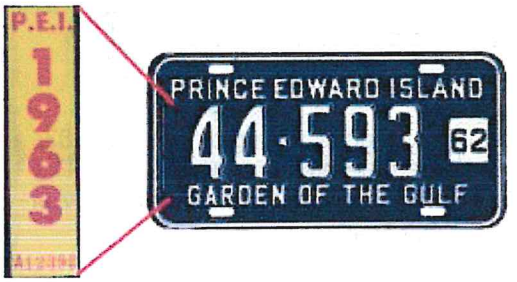
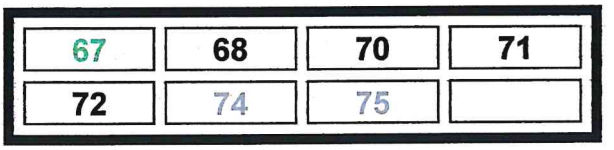
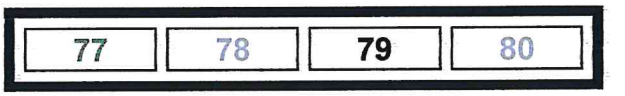
<<< NS | Prince Edward Island (1962 - date) | Nfld >>>

PEI was the first province, along with NB to introduce validation stickers with an unusual 1963 sticker on the base-plate shown. Following that, a series of three and four-year baseplates was issued. Up until 1980, stickers were required on both front and rear plates.





1976-80



Stickers issued in 1977 have a picture of a tent, to commemorate the Boy Scout Jamboree. Beginning in 1980, a special sticker was issued to cover up the sticker on the front plate because a front plate was no longer required.

1981-86

Since 1981, only a single plate was issued in PEI.

No sticker for 1981.

1987-94

Staggered registration was introduced with the 1987

stickers. A separate black and white month sticker was used. The 1989 sticker had a distinctive design and was issued for the Boy Scout Jamboree. It was very hard to read as you can see.

87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94

Special sticker for 1989 Boy Scouts' Jamboree

1994-date

In 1994 the month and year were combined onto a single sticker.

11/94	01/95	01/96	01/97
01/98	01/99	01/00	

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<<< Ont | Québec (1977 - date) | NB >>>

1979-82

Since 1979 Quebec has had a rear plate only.

80	81	82

If a plate was to be invalidated, a special white on black sticker was provided for that purpose. The earlier ones read "PLAQUE ANNULE" which means "plate cancelled".

1983-92

Quebec moved to staggered registration in 1983 with a separate white on blue month sticker.

83	84	85	**86**	87
88	89	**90**	91	**92**

Quebec discontinued the use of year stickers after 1992. You still see some license plates on the road with these stickers. However, motorists are encourage to remove them. Since 1994 even the month stickers were discontinued. No visible means are used to show paid up registration.

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Last updated Mar 8, 2000

<<< Alta | Saskatchewan (1977 - date) | Man >>>

1977-90

The year 77 is screened directly on the plate.
Stickers are affixed on both front and rear.

Saskatchewan was the first province to move to a staggered registration system with the introduction of this plate in 1977.
The month sticker was always red on white.

78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85	86	87
88	89	90	91*	

*January only

1991-97

In 1991 the month and year were combined into a single sticker. A green on white sticker was placed in the lower left to indicate the vehicle type (PV = Passenger Vehicle). This covered up the month sticker which was no longer needed. Later, the designation 'PV' was screened into the plate and covered up with a sticker for non-passenger types as appropriate.

In 1997 a small green on white numbered sticker was added to indicate the day of the month of expiry.

1998 - date

Date stickers are affixed to rear plate only.

Front stickers were no longer required when the new slogan plate was issued. Motorists were given stickers with a picture of a lily to cover up any expired stickers on the front.

Feb91	DJan922	Jan93	Jan94	Jan95
Jan96	Jan97	Jan98	Jan99	Jan00

Lily sticker which goes on front plate.

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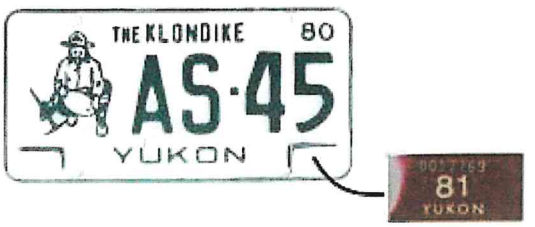
Last updated Feb 3, 2000

<<< BC | Yukon (1980 - date) | NWT >>>



Since 1981 Yukon has issued their plates in pairs with stickers affixed on both front and rear. Since the introduction of the new multi-colored graphic in 1991, Yukon plates have only been issued as singles for the rear.

1982-85

There was no '83 dated sticker since one expiring in March of 1984 was issued instead.

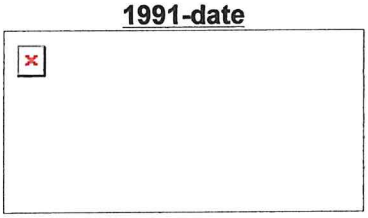
82	--	***Mar84***	*Mar85*

1986-90

Mar86	*Mar87*	*Mar88*	*Mar89*	90

Staggered registration was introduced in 1990 with separate month and year stickers. The month sticker is always white on blue.

1991-date



Rear plate only.

91	92	93	94	95
96	97	98	99	00

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Last updated Jan 11, 2000

Canadian Antique and Historic Vehicle License Plates

Canada has recognized the needs of the owners of antique (aka historic or vintage) vehicles by issuing special plates. By *antique vehicle*, we usually think of a car we remember from our childhood but isn't on the road anymore. The DMV's usually define it as a car which is typically driven for show and parades but not as general transportation. Special license plates for antique vehicles are provided at a reduced registration fee for this limited use. Usually the car itself must be at least 25 years old (this varies from province to province), with no major modifications beyond stock.

All jurisdictions except Saskatchewan, the NWT and Nunavut issue plates for antique cars. Quebec doesn't issue special plates. Anitque vehicles there share the same plates as off-road vehicles (V-designation), or those of limited use (C-designation). Alberta and the Yukon also allow a pair of expired plates, of the same year as the car was manufactured, to be licensed with that vehicle. This is called the Year of Manufacture or YOM law. While it is very popular in the States, it has yet to really catch on in Canada.

The first year of issue of Antique Auto plates by province is given in the following table:

BC	1965[a]	NB	1967
Alta	1968[a]	NS	1966
Sask	-	PEI	1964[c]
Man	1966[a]	Nfld	1982
Ont	1969	Yuk	1980[d]
Que	1972[b]	NWT	-
		Nun	-

[a]Undated permanent plate.
[b]First year law came into effect (off-road V-series plates were used).
[c]Since 1976, the plates have been issued by the Antique Auto Club of PEI.
[d]Law on the books effective Feb. 1, 1980 also allows the use of Yukon plates the same year of manufacture as the car.

While antique motorcycles should be equally recognized as historic vehicles, only two provinces, Manitoba and BC, have issued special plates for them. BC has plates for both "collector" and "vintage" bikes. Using the same rules to classify antique cars, a collector bike is considered 25 years old or more whereas a vintage bike is older than 35 years.

Plates have occasionally been issued for special events and tours of antique autos. These usually are issued by the club or sponsor of the event and are not part of the automobile registration administered by the province. They are not true license plates, despite the fact that many carry a serial number.

Tour Plates

Centennial Tour (1967)
(Canadian Tire)

Antique and Classic
Car Club of Canada

1999 Malahat Challenge
Victoria to Nanaimo tour

© 1999 - 2001 by Joseph P. Sallmen
Last Updated Jul 13, 2001

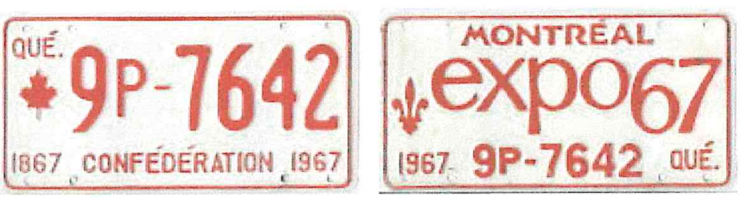
Photo Credits:
ALPCA Archives (Roy Klotz): BC Rally, BC Vintage
Andrew Osborne: Man. vintage m/c (from the Ross Metcalfe collection)
Richard Zral: Yukon Antique Auto

Rest attributed to the Webmaster

CANADA'S CENTENNIAL (1867-1967)

July 1st, 1967 marked the 100th Anniversary of Confederation, when Ontario, Quebec New Brunswick and Nova Scotia joined to form Canada. The remaining provinces joined at later dates. Here is a look at what each province issued the year of Canada's Centennial. Some provinces had slogan on their plates marking the event. Others issued commemorative front ("booster") plates.

The provincial plates with commemorative slogans.



Quebec commemorated both Expo 67 and Confederation with this unusual pair.
Expo 67 was the World's Fair that took place in Montreal that year.
The Expo67 was the front plate. Note the serial number along the bottom.

These provinces issued their normal plates:

The three maritime provinces issued stickers for '67, but no mention of Confederation.

The two territories also chose to continue using their normal plates:

Each of the Territories had nice plates for '67

Special Boosters:

New Brunswick and Manitoba officially issued booster plates for the Centennial. Since New Brunswick had no front plate, a booster of the same color was issued. Because Manitoba, on the other hand, already had a front plate, motorists were allowed to remove it for that year and put the booster on. However the following year, they had to replace the booster with the normal front plate.

Both these plates feature the Centennial Leaf emblem.
The white on red plate on the right is from New Brunswick.

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Page Created Aug 23, 1998
Last updated Sep 25, 1999

HAM Radio License Plates

(VA7 missing)

First issue Alta HAM

(VA3 missing)

Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC)

In Canada, all HAM Radio operators are licensed with the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). Their license numbers (or what they refer to as a "call-sign" or "handle") always start with V since all British Colonies were assigned call signs beginning with that letter after the War. The 18 call sign prefixes in use at this time are assigned to the various provinces as follows:

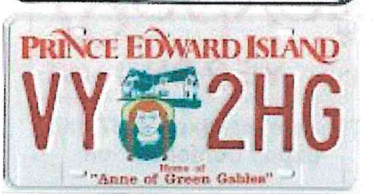
VE1	Maritimes (NB, NS, PEI)	**VO2**	Labrador
VE2	Quebec	**VE0**	Marine
VE3	Ontario	**VE9**	New Brunswick
VE4	Manitoba	**VA2**	Quebec
VE5	Saskatchewan	**VA3**	Ontario
VE6	Alberta	**VA7**	British Columbia
VE7	BC	**VY1**	Yukon
VE8	Nwt, Yukon	**VY2**	PEI
VO1	Newfoundland	**VY0**	Nunavut

Originally Canada was assigned prefixes VE1 thru VE0 and Newfoundland, VO1 & VO2. Newfoundland was different since it wasn't part of Canada when the call signs were being allocated world-wide, just after the 2nd World War. Newfoundland didn't join Canada until 1949. VO6 was also issued to Labrador, but it was retired in the 50s, before plates were issued in that part of the country. When Canada ran out of VE allocations, it expanded using VY and VA as shown in the above table.

The number 0 is really the number 10 in a call sign. Hence, our call sign prefix for Marine operators really is VE10. It is often written shorthand with a slash through it (Ø), but this is not done on Canadian license plates, unlike many of those in the US. Incidentally Marine operators can live in any province and thus the VE0 call sign could theoretically appear on any provincial plate.

The call sign prefix is followed by two or three letters to form the operator's call sign. In the less populated areas such as NWT, the Yukon and Labrador, two letter calls are all that is needed, and three letter calls are available by choice. In more populated areas, both two and three letter calls are needed. In these cases, two letter calls are more desirable and, generally, require seniority to acquire.

The next table shows the HAM Radio call sign prefixes that have been assigned to each province, and their first year of issue on license plates.



Two call signs in use in PEI
The second was never issued since the '2' is in the wrong spot.

Special Issue Nfld HAM

Labrador HAM (VO2)

Last year for VE8 and first year for VY1 in Yukon

The rare matching 1967 pair. Expo / Confederation

A Patriotic HAM - Province de Quebec

(VA2 missing)

Two call signs in use in NB.

BC	**VE7:** 1963 **VA7:** 1999	NB	**VE1:** 1958 **VE9:** 1995
Alta	**VE6:** 1959	NS	**VE1:** 1959
Sask	**VE5:** 1960	PEI	**VE1:** 1959 **VY2:** 1990
Man	**VE4:** 1964	Nfld Lab	**VO1:** 1962 **VO2:** 1965
Ont	**VE3:** 1976 **VA3:** 1994	Yuk	**VE8:** 1973 (ret. 1978) **VY1:** 1979
Que	**VE2:** 1952 **VA2:** 1996	NWT	**VE8:** 1962
		Nun	**VY0:** 1999

In NB, PEI and the Yukon, the original call sign prefixes are no longer being issued. This means new HAMs will receive a call sign using the new prefix. In NB and PEI, existing registrants could keep their original call signs. However, in the Yukon, all HAMs received new call signs beginning with VY1 in 1979.

HAM Radio license plates generally are replaced and designed in tandem with the normal passenger plates. All of the Ontario issues are still valid because all the passenger plates issued since 1973 are still valid, even though the design has changed throughout the years. No HAM radio license plates were issued for 1975 in Quebec, or 1973-76 in the NWT.

Under this heading, mention should be made for Citizens' Band (CB) Radio operators in Canada. The license to operate a CB unit begins with "XM". Some provinces have issued plates to such operators, for example PEI. Nowadays, with the deregulation of CBs, a license is no longer required to operate such a unit.

Missing Nunavut (VY0)

CB Radio License

© 1999 - 2000, Joseph P. Sallmen
Last Updated Oct 10, 2000

Photo Credits:

Charles Carey: Nfld 97 Cabot:
Rest are attributed to the Webmaster.

Special thanks to Bob Gammon for corrections on the above.

Motorcycle License Plates

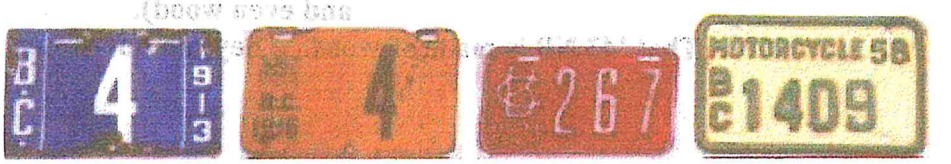
These small plates are both fascinating to spot as well as being popular with collectors. Because motorcycles do not usually travel the great distances that cars do, many people wonder what the other provinces' plates look like, so we present them here. A motorcycle rally is a good place to spot these little tags because riders come from all over.

Unlike car plates, which have long been standardized to the 6 x 12 inch rectangular size (with the exception of the NWT bear), the motorcycle plates even today have no such standardization, and therefore, still come in a variety of sizes as seen here. Some of the provinces such as PEI and Manitoba have used smaller versions of the colorful designs from their car plates. Others such as Nova Scotia and Ontario have stuck to a simpler design. NWT has miniaturized its version of the Polar Bear plate, creating a very popular motorcycle plate dubbed the "Baby Bear"!

Older motorcycle plates are perhaps less interesting to look at, but are a challenge to find. Why is this so? Motorcycling started off as popular transportation at the advent of the automobile, but when Henry Ford made cars plentiful and affordable to own, it quickly dropped off in the '20s and '30s. If you think motorcycle riding is death-defying today, just think of what it must have been like with poorer roads and inferior motorcycle technology. It was regarded more of a sport than as a means of transportation and therefore many bikes went unregistered. Then you have the "rebel without a cause" image that motorcycling portrayed until the 60s; it wasn't accepted as part of mainstream society until sometime after that.

Most collectors are content to get one from each province and territory, but if you are trying to do a run for a particular province, this will be highly frustrating unless you are doing Ontario or Quebec. Most of the other provinces simply didn't have a suitable road system in the early days for motorcyclists unless they had a lot of nerve. In these provinces, up until the '40s, only a few hundred to a couple thousand bikes were registered annually leaving many years unaccounted for. If you are fussy about the condition of your plates, then you will be frustrated because the early examples are usually riddled with rust, and have extra holes from irregular mounting and cracks from excessive vibration.

SOME OLDER MOTORCYCLE PLATES



An odd array of shapes, sizes and materials (porcelain, tin, aluminum and even wood).
That '43 NB is made of wood! They ran out of steel during the war.

Links:

- *Motorcycles-Online* features a nice collage of motorcycles plates from the US, Canada and even military forces. Featured are the current issues as well as some seldom-seen oddball ones.

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Last Updated Jul 12, 2001

Photo Credits:
eBay: '97 Sask
ALPCA Archives: '93 Yukon, '13 Sask
Alan Betts: BC '13, '16, '21, '58; Alta '49, '55; Sask '39; Man '45; NB '40; NS '18, '50; Nfld '37, '51, '52; Yukon '28, '37, '56

Canadian Political / VIP License Plates

Prime Minister John Diefenbaker

Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson

Prime Minister Trudeau

Prime Minister Joe Clark

Premier of BC

Premier of Saskatchewan

In this chapter we shall cover plates issued to high goverment officials (the Prime Minister, the Premiers and Lt-Governors).

A short introduction to Canadian political system would help in appreciating the special license plates.

The Prime Minister is the head of our country and resides in the Nation's Capital, Ottawa. The Legislative Assembly sits in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill. It consists of all elected Members of Parliament (MPs) of various parties, across the country, including the Federal Cabinet (MPs appointed by the Prime Minister to head up varous ministries). The Senate is similar to that in the US, except they are not elected, but rather appointed.

The Premiers are the political leaders of their respecive provinces and usually reside in the capital of that province. They also have Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) sometimes referred to as Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The Permier appoints ministers to head up various functions, wh The two Territories have too small a population to support the standard polical infrastructure, so for this reason their leaders are referred to as commissioners.

Canada is a Commonwealth country and thus maintains close ties with Britain. The representatives to the Crown (the Queen of England) are the Lt. Governor and Governor General. These are appointed, not elected positions. The Governor General resides in Ottawa whereas the Lt. Governor is the representative for that particular province.

Canada throughout its history, in general, has not issued distinctive

Lt. Governors

Lt-Gov - Alberta (year matches number)

Lt-Gov - Manitoba, 1980s

Lt-Gov Ontario (4th car)

Lt-Gov of New Brunwick (two styles)

Lt-Gov - NS

Premier Robert Bourassa

Premier Joey Smallwood

Provincial Legislature (Optional plate; regular issue is red/white)

Member of Legislative Assembly (Never issued)

Territorial Commissioner Stuart Hodgson

Deputy Commissioner

plates for the higher political offices. Usually the lower numbers are reserved for such people in office. Today, many politicians would rather not draw attention while on the road and therefore go with a normal series passenger plate. Lt-Governors, on the other hand, have more often opted for special plates; some of which carry the insignia of a large crown.

Politicians at the Provincial level would be assigned special plates by the Province, those at the Federal Level receive special plates from Ontario. Unlike many countries, our federal capital is not in a separate jurisdiction but simply within a county in Ontario. Hence Federal politicians who reside in Ottawa will receive Ontario plates.

The Prime Minister of Canada has received an Ontario license plate with a number of his own choosing. For example John Diefenbaker chose 2000, Lester Pearson chose 2400 (because of the address of the Prime Minister's Residence at 24 Sussex Drive) and Pierre Trudeau went with 1800. Nowadays the license CAN-001 is reserved for the PM. However some PMs preferred not to use it for security reasons. Joe Clark in his brief tenure in power chose an ordinary passenger combination as shown.

Premiers usually opted for the lowest possible number out of the regular series. Number combinations such as 1, 1000, AAA-001, 1A1, AA1 are typically "low numbers" however one needs to be famliar with the numbering system of that province to know what the lowest number truly was.

The Governor General's official car carries the Governor General's insignia of a lion rather than a license plate, but most provinces have issued special plates for the Lt. Governor. Some of these have large images of a Crown and are quite beautiful.

Lt-Gov - PEI

Lt-Gov - Nfld

Royal Visits

Princess (now Queen) Elizabeth cross Canada Tour.

Royal Visit - NWT

Royal Visits 1982 & 1984

Yukon Territorial Commissioner

Other plates have been issued for the Royal Family while on tour in Canada. Usually all cars within the motorcade would get special plates. The plates issued for the Queen (then Princess) Elizabeth tour in 1951 feature a coat of arms and the year (no provincial desgination). Royal visits (Lady Diana / Prince Charles and the Queen) have been featured on Ontario plates. The NWT has issued plates with crowns whenever the Royal Family visited there. Since there are known plates for 1970, 72, 73 and 81 it seems they visited there quite often!

Royal (dignitary) visit to PEI

Eastern Canada Premiers New England Governor's Annual Conference

1980 - Vergennes Vermont

1991 - PEI

© 1999 - 2001 by Joseph P. Sallmen
Last Updated May 28, 2001

Photo Credits:

ALPCA Archives (Roy Klotz): PEI Lt-Gov, NS Lt-Gov, PEI '75 leaf.
Alan Betts: Yukon '62 #1, Nfld '62 #1.
John Hayes: Princess Elizabeth 1951 Tour.
Andrew Osborne: Manitoba Lt-Gov.
Jon Upton: '63 Ont Lt-Gov (Rubick Collection), 1982, 84 Royal Visits.
Rest are attributed to the webmaster.

Canadian Diplomatic License Plates

The Diplomatic Corps are representatives responsible for foreign relations to various countries. The diplomatic embassies for all countries are located in our Nation's Capital, Ottawa. The Diplomats and their support staff who are not Canadian citizens receive receive distinctive red plates issued in Ontario as all such vehicles must be registered using the address of the embassy in Ottawa. Quebec has issued Diplomatic plates since 1952 for the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a UN body based in Montreal.

The diplomats have always had "CD" on their license plates since 1946. Beginning in the mid 60s, support staff received plates with an 'F' prefix to denote "foreign", later this was changed to "ALN" to denote "Alien", and finally "XT" for "External". Examples are shown here.

Based on a treaty with China, Canada, along with many other countries, do not recognize Taiwan as as independent country. For this reason full diplomatic status is not granted, rather we see them as a foreign organization. They receive special red plates like the diplomats, except with the letters "XOR".

Branch offices (consulates) perform similar functions and are located in major cities coast to coast. Consular Corps plates are issued by most of the provinces which have a consulate.

Diplomatic Corps

Plates before 1959 were normal passenger colors

Since 1959 they have been white on red

Diplomatic Staff

F = Foreign (1963-72)

ALN = Alien (1973-74)

XTR = External (1975 -)

Consular Corps

Heads of mission received numbers below 20.

First plate issued to a Taiwanese official.

Issued to ICAO Personnel

This looks like another Diplomat plate but it's actually Consular Corps.

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Last Updated Oct 10, 2000

Photo Credits:

Alan Betts: Man '69 CC

Rest are attributed to the webmaster.

Canadian Sample License Plates

What is a sample license plate? the uninitiated may ask. Briefly, it is an example of that particular license plate issued as an aid for identification. It is not legal to display it on a vehicle as a valid registration.

These plates are distributed to police stations across Canada and the US so that they will know what license plates from other provinces are supposed to look like. The samples in their possession would help identify plates where only a sketchy description was available. Since these plates are not intended to be displayed on a vehicle, they usually carry a special serial number. The most common ones are a series of zeroes, usually indicating the number of digits one normally would expect to see on the plate. Other configurations are:

- AAA 000 / ABC 000 (indicating a three alpha, three numeric combination)
- SAMPLE (or abbreviated SAM) to make the designation obvious.
- or some dummy number such as 012-345 (in the case of Ontario); 11-111 (Nfld), or ABC-123 (Quebec)

Sometimes sample stickers

are attached to the plate if the base is multi-year.

Later, when collectors of license plates started to appear on the scene, the Motor Vehicle Departments (DMVs) simply provided these plates free upon request. When the number of collectors grew and therefore the number of requests increased, most DMVs started charging a nominal fee for these plates. This was done mostly to cover manufacturing and mailing costs. The fee is typically $5 to $10 for a current sample plate. It is a great way to start a collection and learn what other provinces' plates look like. As a bonus, you will always be assured the plates you receive are in top condition.

Copyright 1999 by Joseph P. Sallmen
Last Updated Dec 27, 1999

Photo Credits:

Nunavut: eBay
Rest are attributed to the webmaster.

Canadian Personalized License Plates

Obviously a very tall driver.

First Alberta vanity: Issued to Minister of Highways & Transport: Clarence Copithorne

The wheat stalks are absent on Sask's vanity plate.

Tony the Tiger's plate

Ontario original own-choice plate.
Off a 427 Pontiac GTO Muscle-car.

Almost everybody has seen license plates on the road carrying a message, instead of a regular serial number. These are called *personalized*, *own-choice* or *vanity* plates. Instead of a regular number assigned by the DMV, it is something the motorist decided to have on his license plate for an extra fee. People might typically request:

- Initials, a name, or their nickname.
- Something related to their profession, for example "2TH DR" for a dentist, or "I SUE 4U" no doubt used by a lawyer.
- Something related to a hobby.
- The model and year of the car to which the plates are attached.
- A favorite sports team.
- A place, perhaps where the driver is from, such as a city, province or country.

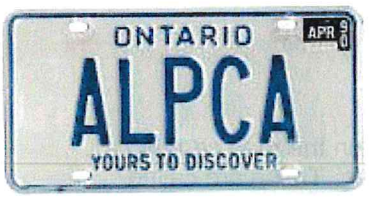
Often the message is too long to fit on the license plate, so motorists will either abbreviate or use numbers or letters that have the same pronunciation as words. For example, "B4 NE1" means "Before Anyone", and "EZ4U2C" means "Easy for you to see". As you can see, you can come up with some real 'bumper stumpers' if you carry this too far. Many can leave you guessing. Does "FYR LDY" mean "Fair Lady", or "Fire Lady"? Only the owner knows for sure! Next time you are on the road, why not keep an eye out for these and see how many you can figure out?

How it all started....

In the beginning, certain numbers would be assigned to people of political importance. These were usually the lowest numbers in the series, for example: the plates numbered from 1 to 1,000, or plates beginning with A. Collectors prefer to call these *courtesy* plates because they were not available to the general public.

Some provinces have issued plates with people's initials as a political favor or for a special event. This was done in Quebec, for example, in the days before the province started providing the license plates in 1911. In a way, these were the first true vanity plates.

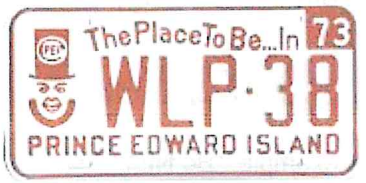
The true own-choice plate concept has been around in the United States much longer than in Canada. Some states, such as Vermont and Connecticut, allowed motorists to choose their own messages for an extra fee as early as the 50s. Ontario was the first province to introduce the own-choice plate program, in 1973. The choice had to be the same format as the regular passenger plates, 3 letters followed by 3 numbers. This program did not take off until Ontario changed the rules in 1983,



Automobile License Plate Collectors' Association

Someone's Phone number!
(The number is out of service!)

(Missing NS)



Original vanity of 1973
(Three letter / 2 number)

"Easy to do"

Off a '42 Harley

allowing people to have whatever they liked, up to 6 characters, on the plate.

PEI also introduced a similar program in 1973. A motorist could request 3 letters followed by 2 numbers, but this plate could only be displayed on the front of the car. It was not until the late '80s that a true own choice program was introduced. BC has issued a separate graphic for vanity plates and it has proven to be quite popular.

Today, the motorist applies for his message and provided it is not taken already by someone else, waits for the approval. Needless to say, there are restrictions on what a motorist can request. Dirty words, racial slurs, sexual innuendo, religious terms are not allowed for the most part.

The first year of introduction of personalized plates by provinces is given in the following table.

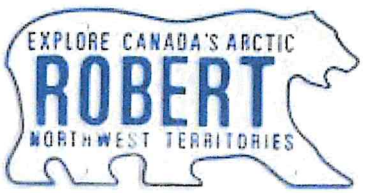
BC	1980	NB	1987
Alta	1984	NS	1989?
Sask	1980s?	PEI	1973
Man	1983	Nfld	-
Ont	1973	Yuk	1990?
Que	-	NWT	1986?
		Nun	1999

Quebec and Newfoundland do not have vanity plates. Quebec does, however, allow you to display anything you want on the front of your car. In the past, such as in 1978, when Quebec started issuing only a single plate, they have made plates with people's names or other slogans of choice, for the front of the car only.

Some provinces have further restrictions, in many cases, to make sure the own choice does not correspond to a regular issue series - otherwise the same plate may accidentally be made twice, as a vanity, then as a regular issue!

Current Rules

BC	Up to 6 characters	NB	Up to 7 characters
Alta	Up to 7 characters	NS	Up to 7 characters
Sask	Up to 6 characters	PEI	Up to 7 characters
Man	Up to 6 characters	Nfld	-
Ont	Up to 8 characters	Yuk	The miner graphic is



(Missing Nunavut)

(No vanities for Que & Nfld)

			omitted for choices over 5 characters.
Que	-	NWT	Up to 6 characters
		Nun	Up to 6 characters

- **ONTARIO:** In 1973, all personlized plates had to be of the ABC-123 format. In 1983 they introduced a new "own choice plate" program where 2 to 6 characters were permitted. Any combination was allowed *except* ABC-123 combinations that would conflict with the regular passenger series. Later they decided no more than 2 digits could be used. Ontario introduced 7 and 8 character vanity plates on April 10, 2000 at a very expensive cost of $500, but later the cost was reduced to $200, presumably, after they figured most of the desirable combinations would have been taken.

- **PEI:** In 1973 they introduced a limited program with their new centennial plate. The choice had to be of the ABC-12 format, and the plate could only be used on the front of the car. PEI issued normal plates in pairs so at least motorists could reign supreme over half the car! These plates were discontinued with the new baseplate issued in 1976. It was not until the late 80s that PEI re-introduced vanity plates without any restrictions.

- Most provinces which allow vanity plates, also allow motorcycle vanities, usually with fewer characters.

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Photo Credits:

Peter Hill: Yukon "ROCK ON"
Rest are attributed to the webmaster.

Canadian Municipal License Plates

Bicycle license plates

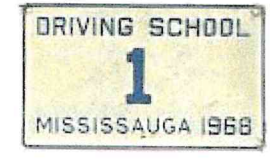
Municipalities in Canada have issued license plates for all kinds of uses; from bicycles, to popsicle carts, even vending machines. If there's a bylaw on the books which requires a license to operate, chances are a license plate or some sort of validation decal has been issued to show the licensing fee has been paid. We shall only cover metal license plates.

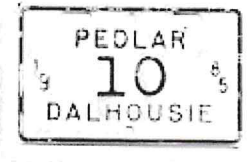
The most common license plates we see in this category are for bicycles. In the early days bicycles were seen as a form of transportation and, therefore, it made sense to tax them as they were part of the normal road traffic. Today, cycling is seen more as a recreational activity, and many cyclists would prefer to be on designated paths rather than in traffic. Of the multitude of municipalities which did issue bicycle license plates, it is likely that only a small handful remain today. Most cities simply allow you to register your bike at the police station, free of charge, on a voluntary basis. If there is any nominal fee involved, it would probably be administered by a local bicycle club for the upkeep of trails, and therefore no license plate would be necessary.

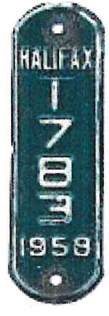
As you can see, these bicycle plates have been issued in all sorts of shapes and sizes. The earliest ones were simply brass tags, similar in style to the familiar dog tags. Many cities had theirs made by the Bicycle Guild of Montreal. They are the small plastic square plates on the left. Those of French-Speaking towns often had bilingual legends. Occasionally we see the odd slogan such as "Winnipeg Centennial" on the 1974 plate as illustrated on the left.

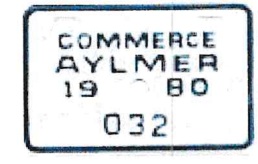
There are many other uses for which license plates have been issued. When metal tags are issued they vary widely from city to city. Shown at right are just a few examples. The most common plates are those for taxis and vendors. Some municipalities require license plates for Driving School vehicles. Others require plates for local delivery and cartage. Some even require a plate for a rickshaw, a human operated pull cart which is popular in the East, but used here to carry tourists around town.

Sundry uses









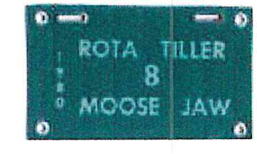


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Photo Credits:

Paul Wingert: Saskatoon '46 bicycle
eBay (user nospe): Yellowknife Snowmobile.

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War Veterans Key Chain Tags

War-Amps by Province

Note the matching pair.

Since 1946, the War Veterans have been issuing tiny key chain identification tags as a fundraiser, to help in the return of lost keys. The identification tags are mailed out, and recepients are asked to send in a modest donation for this service. Anyone finding keys with a Veterans' tag, is instructed drop them in the nearest mailbox. The keys would then be delivered to the Veterans' HQ, who in turn would forward them back to the owner. Besides War Veterans themselves, the program also employs handicapped people.

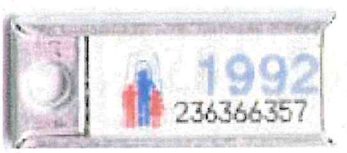
At first, the tags, issued in pairs, were mailed unsolicited to most people with a personal car. Since they were targeted to motorists, they displayed a miniature version of the owner's license plate as identification. This worked well, until the mid 70s when most provinces were issuing semi-permanent plates validated by stickers. This meant the owner kept the same plate for several years. Some felt little need to buy next years' tags when last years' would already identify their keys. Another problem was that some finders of lost keys with such tags would look for the matching car and drive off! The Veterans decided to replace the license plate number with a serial number, unrelated to a license plate. This would still allow them to identify the owner of the keys through their database. Another advantage to this change was that it encouraged broader participation; anyone owning a set of key would see a benefit to using the tags.

It should be noted various veterans' groups were responsible for issuing these tags. The War Amputees (or "War Amps") had the lions' share of the program, issuing the tags for every province except BC. Those in BC were issued by the Tuberculosis Veterans (or "TB Vets"). The Police Veterans had a brief participation in Quebec, handling the tags from 1950-57 before handing that jurisdiction back to the War Amps.

When the tags carried the serial number of the motorist's license plate, they were made as a miniature version. Any graphics or crests which appeared on the license plates were carefully duplicated, giving a realistic, attractive appearance. The represention of the plate together with the serial number were printed on a small piece of laminated cardboard. Sample tags not intended for issue usually carried the number 1000 or a series of zeros. A metal frame with a key ring was used to encapsulate the small cardboard tag. Around 1969, their shape became

War-Amps (Nationwide, except BC)

Style of 1981-83



Style of 1984-96 (metal)

Unique style of 1990 (plastic)

Style of 1992-95 (plastic)

War Amps 50th Anniverary (Special Gold Tags)

The numbers wore off easily...

(10-00 indicates a sample)

more rectangular, without the key ring sticking out. These tags were assembled by the Veterans themselves at their HQ. Those in BC, issued by the TB Vets were made of plastic. A few examples are shown this page. Because of their attractiveness, some consider them highly collectible.

From the mid 70s the tags were identified by province, but the license plate design was dropped. The serial number no longer corresponded with the owner's license plate number. The design featured the province's coat-of-arms, a date, and the computer printed serial number.

In 1981 the War Amps went to a Nationwide design, dropping the provincial designation. These tags featured a Canadian Maple Leaf, and from 1984, the War Amps logo. Eventually by the early 90s, the tags were made of plastic like the TB Veterans tags. During the transition period you could order either metal or plastic tags. And to be politically correct, these tags exist with bilingual legends.

The TB Veterans of course have always kept their provincial designation. Recently, the TB Veterans tags have been available to supporters outside of BC. They are not allowed to bulk mail them outside the province, however if a supporter moved out of province, they may still be mailed out to that specific individual. Today, anyone can voluntarily support either the War Amps or TB Veterans by requesting tags through their websites.

Universal Provincial design

(no license plate number)

First year of Veterans Tags by Province

BC	1946[a]	NB	1954
Alta	1946	NS	1949
Sask	1946	PEI	1951[c]
Man	1946	Nfld	1953

So replaced with this type.

Revised tags in 1996.

TB Vets (issued from BC)

On the early ones, the design wore off easily.

Special issue for ALPCA members. BC did not have vanities in 1974.

Provincial Crest Design.

Ont	1946	Yuk	1962[d]
Que	1947[b]	NWT	1962[d]

Current Design - BC's Vanity plate

- [a]In 1950 the War Amps mailed tags out to BC.
- [b]Years 1950-57 issued by the Police Veterans; all other years by the War Amps.
- [c]Years 1954-56 unknown.
- [d]Discontinued after 1972 due to lack of interest.

Links

- The War Amputees website can be found at www.waramps.org.
- The TB Veterans website can be found at www.tbvets.org.
- A very comprehensive site on this history of this subject can be found at www.keychaintags.com. This site covers both US and Canadian tags.

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Last Updated Sep 20, 2001

Photo Credits:
James Hermoe: Nfld '66 & PEI '52
Gordon Peterson: BC '54
Rest are attributed to the Webmaster.

Special thanks goes to George Dingle for providing information on the TB Vets program.

Canadian Forces License Plates

Canadian Forces - Domestic

1962-68 Ontario issue

BC 'National Defense' issue

Nfld Can/US 'Forces' issue

First Nation-wide issue ('68)

'CANADA' nameplate rivited on

With maple leaf stickers

As you might expect, Canada has issued license plates for their military both home and abroad. The license plates issued for domestic use are generally issued only to DND (Department of National Defense) owned vehicles whereas those issued abroad are generally issued to both military vehicles and personnel. With the recent pull-out of the Canadian Forces from Germany, the license plates issued abroad aren't as prevalent as they once were.

At one point, each province was responsible for registration of the military vehicles. Many simply issued federal government plates to such vehicles, but a few did make distinctive plates. BC issued plates since the 50s beginning with 'N' which stood for National Defence. Ontario issued Forces plates, beginning in WW2, for the vehicles on the various bases, such as CFB Trenton and Petawawa. The Ontario plates are undated permanent plates in a characteristic white on brown color with a double crown.

Many bases have issued small plates as permits to allow access. These were typically affixed on the front of the car so that the guards at the gate could quickly identify cars with the proper access privileges. In addition, plates have been issued to bicycles for use on the base. Nowadays most bases use windshield stickers instead of metal plates.

In 1968, Canada took over the registration of the federally owned DND vehicles. They were given reflective DND plates. Since such vehicles occasionally travelled abroad for peace keeping missions, it was decided to rivit a tag reading "CANADA" on these plates, as shown, to make their meaning clearer. Later on, CANADA was simply embossed or screened onto the plate itself, and some have maple leaf decals instead

Canadian Forces Abroad

Canadian Forces - Germany

First issue plastic ('57)

Style of 1957-61 (aluminum)

Style of 1961-68

Style of 1968-70

1957-68 m/c plate

Canadian Forces - Europe

Special issue APEC '97 in BC

CFB Shilo - Manitoba

of the embossed maple leaves. All these plates have adhesive numbers on a reflective background. Some issues are made of aluminum, whereas others are steel. All of these plates should have 5 characters with leading zeroes if necessary. Anything else is a sample, made up for collectors.

The Canadian Forces abroad plates have a greater variety of designs. License plates for our Air Force in Europe as well as our bases in Germany have been issued.

The Canadian Forces in Germany plates have undergone several design changes from when they were first introduced in 1957 (before that they used British Zone plates). The first issues were plastic and proved so fragile that they were replaced the same year by lookalike aluminum plates. They retained their white on blue design until 1970 when they were replaced by a general forces in Europe issue.

The Air Force plates are issued to Canadian AFBs in France, Germany and Italy. These first had the design of a French plate, and later (about 1963) took on a standard 6x12 design. The first digit on these plates indicates the AFB. In 1970 these plates were replaced by the red on white plates.

In 1970, the AFB and German Army base plates were amalgamated into a standard red on white CDN forces in Europe plate. The first issues had maple leaves, but in the mid 80s, the maple leaves were dropped. Quite a few types of these plates existed, with special plates being issued to Army Officers and Commanders. Green on white plates were issued for military vehicles. Some of them identified the base (within Germany) by letter prefixes. As we have closed most of our European Operations, being more involved with NATO and UN peacekeeping missions, these plates seldom appear today.

Style of 1970-mid 80s

Style of 1990s (reflective)

m/c plate 1970-85

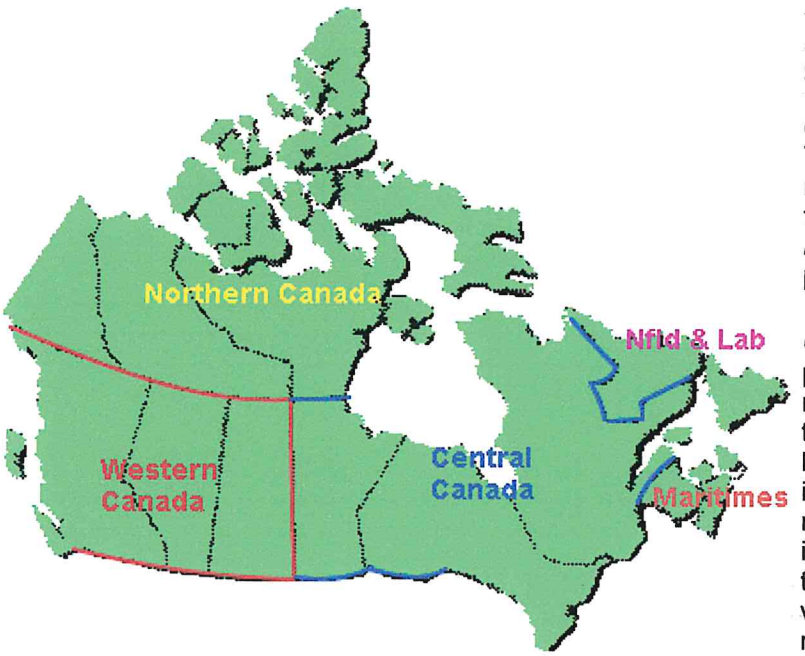
Current motorcycle plate

Air Force in Europe

1952-62 w/ attachment for identification in France.

1963-70

Vehicle Registration Figures across Canada



Select the region you wish to explore

Here we present the vehicle registration statistics for each province. The objective is to given the reader an idea how many plates were issued by each province in any given year. The number of vehicles registered each year is shown for *passenger cars* and *motorcycles*, the two most popular classes.

Commercial vehicles have been purposely left out since they may represent a myriad of vehicle types. Each of these, such as buses, ambulances, then trucks in various weight classes, might receive distinctive plates. Suffice it to say there were roughly 1/4 to 1/3 as many commercial vehicles as passenger cars registered in any given year, except the early years when many provinces were only beginning to make the distinction.

Other notes...

- The registration figures give you a good idea how many plates were manufactured. It is entirely possible to find a plate with a registration number higher than the total number registered for two good reasons.
  - There was always a surplus of plates kept in reserve for any given year - most of these went unissued. Usually they were destroyed but occasionally some of these were saved.
  - The numbering system didn't always start at one. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, the PEI numbering started at 10001; in NB and Nfld it was 1001.
- There are many other factors that affect the availability of older license plates. Please read the Guide to Collecting License Plates. This covers the availabity by province.
- License plates were usually issued in pairs, but did you know that sometimes they were issued as singles as a cost cutting measure? We usually think of a motorcycle having only one plate on the rear, but sometimes these were issued in pairs or even sets of three! Two would be rivited back to back to go on the front fender, and the third would be placed on the rear fender). The notes on availability include this data.

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Last updated Aug 15, 2000

Vehicle Registration Figures for Western Canada

	British Columbia		Alberta		Saskatchewan	
Date	Passenger Cars	Motorcycles	Passenger Cars	Motorcycles	Passenger Cars	Motorcycles
1975	1,156,964	26,159	715,713	29,718	348,855	9,465
1974	999,957	34,982	687,345	30,474	328,940	8,183
1973	961,497	33,495	627,931	27,028	304,885	6,617
1972	906,268	29,372	588,399	24,528	292,487	5,874
1971	856,086	25,339	557,913	23,593	277,690	4,324
1970	811,590	22,500	530,420	19,393	284,251	4,257
1969	790,493	20,905	508,835	16,370	284,356	3,860
1968	740,979	18,464	486,401	14,208	287,611	3,865
1967	702,003	17,229	470,143	12,899	282,374	3,834
1966	664,791	15,387	445,195	11,615	272,749	4,350
1965	623,742	13,376	424,217	8,970	267,771	2,540
1964	571,807	9,012	408,382	7,824	259,919	1,042
1963	531,116	5,279	393,422	5,712	250,183	816
1962	495,308	4,389	376,095	4,879	242,271	820
1961	467,370	4,239	356,721	4,005	228,269	760
1960	446,050	4,080	339,512	3,534	213,147	786
1959	419,422	4,128	315,057	2,805	207,612	767
1958	393,337	4,041	294,910	2,274	199,495	716
1957	371,727	3,714	276,679	1,992	186,543	663
1956	341,650	3,724	256,177	1,849	179,986	651
1955	303,481	3,765	236,395	1,649	166,864	677
1954	276,161	3,744	222,305	1,853	162,980	642
1953	258,940	3,825	207,402	2,306	157,942	925
1952	236,711	3,929	189,287	2,369	147,824	1,071
1951	213,770	4,144	168,482	2,508	137,038	1,102
1950	198,397	4,609	150,546	2,473	129,302	1,224
1949	165,106	4,681	130,945	2,265	120,291	1,298
1948	143,675	4,536	116,350	1,814	109,718	1,179
1947	128,611	4,364	105,132	1,534	105,329	1,000
1946	109,077	3,038	95,764	994	100,905	795
1945	99,421	2,506	92,334	742	96,268	772
1944	99,063	3,134	91,828	705	98,412	777
1943	98,920	3,306	92,551	889	93,895	722
1942	100,582	3,227	93,103	890	89,742	742
1941	105,410	2,421	96,303	741	94,973	744
1940	101,452	2,254	92,814	715	93,176	643
1939	96,737	1,938	88,516	674	89,471	553
1938	94,346	1,869	85,244	605	83,635	510
1937	91,549	1,813	81,713	547	83,905	487
1936	84,062	1,635	79,538	529	81,519	444
1935	78,999	1,544	76,882	480	75,727	365
1934	73,997	1,495	73,444	469	74,050	358
1933	71,439	1,446	71,331	467	69,713	347
1932	73,725	1,384	71,982	409	75,685	272
1931	79,451	1,434	79,140	383	91,805	306
1930	80,766	1,352	85,604	447	108,812	275
1929	78,065	1,272	85,848	390	109,537	218
1928	70,828	1,046	79,133	346	103,796	174
1927	63,715	962	68,347	260	93,563	179
1926	56,272	798	60,413	326	87,118	161
1925	46,336	770	51,038	362	72,196	184
1924	39,438	792	45,871	331	65,928	187
1923	33,144	868	39,742	390	60,931	224
1922	34,385[a]	880	38,214	403	60,349[a]	296
1921	33,505	-	38,163	-	61,184	339
1920	28,000	-	38,015	-	60,325	424
1919	22,420	-	34,000	-	56,855	453
1918	15,370	-	29,250	-	50,531	561
1917	11,645	-	20,624	-	32,505	234

1916	9,457	-	9,707	-	15,900	418
1915	8,360	-	5,832	-	10,225	370
1914	7,628	-	4,728	-	8,020	410
1913	6,138	-	3,773	-	4,659	461
1912	4,289	-	2,505	-	2,286	146
1911	2,220	-	1,631	-	1,304	-
1910	1,026	-	423	-	531	-
1909	504	-	275	-	149	-
1908	263	-	45	-	74	-
1907	175	-	55	-	55	-
1906	-	-	41	-	22	-

- [a]Up to 1922 figures include commercial vehicles.

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Last updated Jul 25, 2000

Vehicle Registration Figures for Central Canada

	Manitoba		Ontario		Quebec	
Date	Passenger Cars	Motorcycles	Passenger Cars	Motorcycles	Passenger Cars	Motorcycles
1975	395,098	9,314	3,225,243	72,550	2,188,895	155,461
1974	378,194	8,585	3,111,667	67,176	2,186,808	150,572
1973	355,175	7,478	3,002,091	62,200	2,009,868	135,545
1972	326,848	6,013	2,848,907	57,727	1,871,802	111,869
1971	318,821	5,969	2,713,054	52,826	1,690,802	75,512
1970	306,559	5,740	2,576,041	45,251	1,602,129	49,758
1969	299,695	5,152	2,501,718	39,875	1,534,682	41,520
1968	288,750	4,953	2,424,916	47,826	1,448,120	40,623
1967	280,480	5,136	2,312,344	42,941	1,370,514	33,271
1966	270,175	4,822	2,235,489	37,959	1,168,073	24,985
1965	260,339	3,276	2,139,696	24,070	1,145,785	16,586
1964	258,076	2,029	2,028,528	10,334	1,115,023	14,591
1963	247,105	1,504	1,926,878	7,141	1,068,291	14,174
1962	236,737	1,368	1,840,119	7,323	986,457	12,228
1961	226,376	1,334	1,794,444	8,944	909,322	12,934
1960	213,263	1,439	1,732,933	9,361	843,731	13,153
1959	199,467	1,536	1,647,379	10,086	798,935	12,828
1958	190,964	1,499	1,550,457	10,148	734,403	12,893
1957	182,555	1,602	1,477,409	11,522	677,336	13,040
1956	173,035	1,747	1,401,259	11,652	627,993	13,414
1955	162,362	1,362	1,317,590	12,321	549,129	13,955
1954	151,915	1,577	1,205,285	12,454	490,819	14,703
1953	145,052	1,762	1,130,882	13,314	440,720	15,076
1952	131,992	2,000	1,034,755	13,407	402,864	16,016
1951	119,775	1,955	966,357	13,470	350,435	16,432
1950	110,998	1,994	887,571	13,709	302,811	16,122
1949	99,91-4	1,757	772,744	13,062	267,097	14,013
1948	91,860	1,542	699,583	11,212	237,942	11,441
1947	80,201	1,118	646,546	9,569	215,322	6,962
1946	73,976	856	586,907	6,982	187,726	3,524
l945	69,268	694	556,740	5,745	171,240	2,834
1944	70,643	738	569,544	5,901	171,385	2,734
1943	71,603	748	587,483	6,415	171,369	2,814
1942	71,673	766	613,440	6,104	173,036	2,850
1941	75,962	726	638,278	5,894	184,167	2,875
1940	73,404	770	612,431	5,403	180,556	2,811
1939	70,506	667	595,586	5,099	171,766	2,879
1938	71,450	714	582,240	5,206	166,447	2,667
1937	65,747	640	543,649	4,582	161,317	2,526
1936	61,730	660	514,211	4,553	148,374	2,498
1935	59,470	590	491,980	4,506	139,497	2,489
1934	59,285	590	473,341	4,468	135,441	2,414
1933	58,254	610	456,223	4,370	130,658	2,265
1932	61,026	530	466,162	4,088	135,594	2,225
1931	64,852	540	493,890	4,070	146,266	2,318
1930	68,464	520	496,892	3,924	147,821	2,383
1929	68,372	572	481,448	3,541	140,229	2,380
1928	63,336	503	429,426	3,197	123,641	2,263
1927	57,671	484	386,903	3,159	107,204	2,216
1926	53,069	514	343,992	3,345	90,519	2,084
1925	46,703	542	303,736	3,748	80,854	2,083
1924	40,843	557	271,341	3,941	70,736	2,018
1923	39,192	642	245,815	4,325	60,363	1,701
1922	38,913	855	210,333	4,799	52,144	1,886
1921	39,240	1,096	181,978	4,989	47,365	1,709
1920	37,103	1,154	155,861	5,496	35,965	1,528
1919	30,223	985	127,860	5,516	29,456	1,504
1918	24,114	9148	101,845	5,002	24,187	940
1917	17,220	949	78,861	5,180	19,448	644
1916	12,170	941	51,589	4,287	14,159	460

1915	9,010	927	42,346	4,174	9,288	296
1914	7,131	925	31,724	3,633	6,824	205
1913	5,596	802	23,700	2,900	5,432	-
1912	4,099	537	16,268	1,754	3,535	-
1911	2,436	264	11,339	-	1,878	-
1910	1,660	55	4,230	-	786	-
1909	708	-	2,452	-	485	-
1908	418	-	1,754	-	396	-
1907	-	-	1,530	-	254	-
1906	-	-	1,176	-	167	-
1905	-	-	553	-	-	-
1904	-	-	535	-	-	-
1903	-	-	178	-	-	-

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Vehicle Registration Figures for the Maritimes

	New Brunswick		Nova Scotia		PEI	
Date	Passenger Cars	Motorcycles	Passenger Cars	Motorcycles	Passenger Cars	Motorcycles
1975	218,919	9,656	262,187	8,463	40,661	1,662
1974	208,229	7,653	253,521	6,922	39,430	1,442
1973	198,671	6,010	242,538	4,732	37,014	1,075
1972	185,183	4,668	229,034	4,928	34,231	806
1971	171,567	3,818	234,011	4,641	32,251	703
1970	159,307	3,431	201,954	4,256	30,376	693
1969	156,102	3,430	232,940	4,595	29,229	652
1968	157,444	3,554	207,477	4,333	27,752	679
1967	149,723	3,881	187,765	4,261	27,634	631
1966	144,900	3,475	174,380	3,668	26,689	460
1965	137,137	2,064	178,389	2,149	25,796	200
1964	130,463	889	169,490	896	24,323	142
1963	123,035	799	160,482	776	23,328	117
1962	118,483	812	153,595	813	22,092	137
1961	112,764	836	156,663	891	20,440	111
1960	106,167	817	140,151	892	19,170	127
1959	98,523	879	140,196	1,002	17,408	119
1958	91,428	893	119,569	1,003	15,860	117
1957	86,518	917	118,216	1,039	14,595	126
1956	81,390	907	111,141	1,172	14,163	148
1955	74,602	962	106,763	1,133	13,436	133
1954	67,624	1,021	90,068	1,201	12,551	140
1953	63,041	1,193	88,985	1,348	12,218	121
1952	58,991	1,313	74,831	1,512	11,667	100
1951	54,327	1,386	69,786	1,687	11,176	84
1950	48,890	1,464	62,417	1,647	10,392	81
1949	43,989	1,309	54,419	1,283	9,086	51
1948	40,795	1,131	50,198	1,016	8,297	48
1947	34,611	731	47,109	804	7,559	37
1946	30,670	328	42,791	585	7,134	45
1945	28,794	259	40,314	586	6,744	40
1944	29,177	306	41,756	694	6,833	40
1943	30,083	377	42,509	1,073	6,670	28
1942	27,623	384	42,844	803	6,268	33
1941	31,945	361	47,208	669	6,773	16
1940	30,560	267	45,120	468	6,824	23
1939	30,457	187	41,919	291	6,804	18
1938	30,257	196	40,876	272	6,840	22
1937	29,937	174	39,900	303	6,993	21
1936	27,731	176	37,478	296	6,746	21
1935	26,185	173	35,820	312	7,420	16
1934	24,614	148	34,443	329	6,409	23
1933	22,890	146	33,133	314	6,155	25
1932	24,030	135	33,798	335	6,181	29
1931	29,223	178	36,431	386	6,917	25
1930	30,318	172	36,078	319	6,611	26
1929	27,962	162	33,748	300	5,537	11
1928	25,064	146	30,327	204	4,952	8
1927	22,289	93	26,084	190	4,115	11
1926	19,412	103	22,551	177	3,289	6
1925	17,420	85	20,012	135	2,815	7
1924	18,310	82	18,199	137	2,462	6
1923	15,405	74	16,084	129	2,330	8
1922	12,609	98	14,177	145	2,059	8
1921	12,585	-	12,550	-	1,673	7
1920	10,442	-	11,150	-	1,354	10
1919	7,840	-	10,300	-	911	6
1918	6,259	-	8,150	-	594	5
1917	4,889	-	5,100	-	303	-
1916	2,936	-	3,050	-	50	-

1915	1,900	-	2,300	-	34	-
1914	1,260	-	1,710	-	31	-
1913	824	-	511	-	26	-
1912	700	-	456	-	-	-
1911	483	-	228	-	-	-
1910	297	-	148	-	-	-
1909	167	-	69	-	-	-
1908	104	-	-	-	-	-
1907	79	-	-	-	-	-
1906	41	-	-	-	-	-
1905	12	-	-	-	-	-

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Guide to License Plate Collecting

This book is intended as a historical reference but it will no doubt appeal to license plate collectors. This chapter presents a list of frequently asked questions about license plate collecting and their values.

Your objective is to collect...what?

There are many reasons and ways to collect license plates. The most common objective is to complete a run in their jurisdiction of choice. Others like to do their birthyear, that is they save every plate with that date on it. Others like a common theme such as motorcycle, amateur radio, political, and so on. The ways of collecting are about as numerous as there are collectors. If you decide to collect it is better to focus on a couple of your favorite themes rather than just anything from under the sun. This will make it a lot easier to keep track, organize and display.

Where do I find them?

Finding old expired license plates isn't as difficult as one first might think. Old license plates used to be nailed up in old barns and garages, and generally were free for the asking. As with anything old, many have begun to recognize their value, so these days are long gone. Today they typcially will show up at flea markets and antique shops. Advertising in the local paper sometimes brings a phone call from someone who happened to have a bunch saved away. Other collectors have gone as far as going door to door asking for old license plates! Newer plates can be found in junkyards at at the department of motor vehicles. Since all provinces have plates validated by stickers nowadays, it has become more difficult to get them from these sources.

Today many of the rare pieces have made their way into established collections but new treasures are still being discovered. This gives hope to those just starting out. However be forewarned that the places where you would expect early plates to be rare (PEI, Nfld, Yukon and the NWT) have been scoured thoroughly by crafty collectors years ago. Your chances of finding anything good from there today are slim. It is usually necessary to obtain the rare pieces from these established collectors.

Value is in the eye of the beholder...

For any collectible nowadays there seems to be the demand for a price guide. The first question many ask about an old license plate is "What is it worth?". The problem is, there is no established market for license plates. It is not as mainstream as coins and stamps for example, which have their own well-known catalogues. For the more esoteric collectibles, there are far fewer transactions to go by, and most of which, particularly those for the rarer items, are usually confidential between the buyer and seller.

While we feel there is not enough actual data to write a reliable price guide, one reputable collector[1] has made this effort. They have tried to record market data and have published a price guide on North American (US and Canada) license plates. If you are interested in finding out the market value of any given item, you may consult this reference, but it should be emphasized that it is just a guide.

Another approach would be to use a popular on-line auction such as eBay.com. There you can search for the items of interest, and see how people are bidding (and therefore prepared to pay) for an item. As with any hobby, you should collect for fun and enjoyment, not to make a quick buck or speculate.

Rarity: The numbers issued speak for themselves.

Instead of publishing a price guide we prefer to let the registration figures speak for themselves. You may think of them as a "mintage" (a term popular with coin collectors indicating how many of a particular issue was made). We list the registration figures for the two most popular classes with collectors and automotive historians: passenger car and motorcycle. On a province by province basis, this gives a good first-hand account on the relative rarity of issues. In the accompanying notes on availability, we note when license plates were issued as pairs, or as singles.

Go for quality, not rust!

Condition affect the collectibility of a particular license plate. This is important to consider, as few will want to display a "rust bucket" in their collection unless it is a very rare item. So we present here a guide for grading license plates, be they porcelain, tin, or the newer graphics. Many provinces have what we call "tough paint years". These refer to the case when the plates manufactured were of inferior quality, making nice examples hard to find today. This can also be attributed to the

climate. These issues are addressed on a province by province basis in the availability guide.

Of those issued, how many survived to this day?

The other aspect affecting collectibility is the survival rate. This basically means how many specimens have survived in collectible condition to this day. Obviously you would expect it to be lower for the earlier issues than the more recent ones because there were fewer collectors saving them back then. Coupled with the obvious lower registration figures, this presents a "double whammy" to the collector trying to find the first few years to complete his provincial run. Occasionally a box of early plates, all of the same year will turn up, making them more available than you would otherwise think.

The survival rate is affected by:

- The material the plates were made of. Porcelain holds up better over time than any tin, but finding pristine examples free of unsightly chips is next to impossible. The flat tin plates of the teens are probably the worst as they had a tnedency to rust away to nothing legible. Fiberboard for obvious reasons, did not hold up well over time.
- The climate. Salty air, or a humid climate takes its toll a lot faster on most plates, than a relatively dry climate. Strong sunlight can also cause the paint to fade and crack.

Sure it's rare, but does anybody want it?

A third and final aspect affecting collectibility is popularity. Most collectors prefer the passenger plates over anything else. Truck and trailer plates are generally less popular. Motorcycle plates are very popular because of the number of motorcycle enthusiasts today and also because of their obvious rarity. Other popular themes are political, samples, amateur radio and others covered in this book.

Pairs vs. singles

Is a pair of license plates more desirable than the two single plates separately? This is a hard question to answer. To many car buffs who restore antique cars, having a pair to display on their fond possession is much more valuable than a single but to a collector generally a pair only means having a extra one to trade. Whether you want to keep a pair together or trade one off to get an another plate of comparable value for your collection is a matter of personal taste. Of course pairs do not exist for certain years, especially those years after the war when metal was scarce. Consult the availability guide to learn which years were issued as singles by each province.

Cherished numbers

Does a special serial number on the plate make it more desirable? That is a good question. In many cases the lowest numbers for any particular year are issued to government officials so that enhances their value. Generally any number under 1000 is a good one, or for the more populous provinces such as Ontario and Quebec, any 4-digit number is good. Lower numbers in the earlier years before the size standardization in 1957 often result in shorter plates ("shorties") and these desirable. Also keep in mind that some jurisdictions started their numbering at 1001 or even 10-001, making "low" numbers impossible. Repeating digits such as "333-333" or round numbers like "50-000" are usually more desirable when there aren't any prefix or suffix letters, for example "111-11A" or "E-4000".

To restore or not to restore? That is the question.

How about restored or repainted plates? Most collectors prefer nice originals, but restored plates have their spot when an original is difficult to find in nice condition, or difficult to find, period. The value of repainted or restored plates to a collector will depend of course on the degree and quality of the restoration job. Some collectors prefer to leave everything they get as is. So it is usually best to restore plates you intend to keep, but leave that decision up to the buyer for those you intend to get rid of. Should you decide to restore some license plates, this book should prove helpful in identifying the correct colors. Great effort has been taken to show the best possible examples.

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1: License Plate Values - A Guide to Relative Prices of Collectible U.S. and Canadian Auto License Plates and their Grading Edited by Bob and Chuck Crisler.

AVAILABILITY OF CANADIAN LICENSE PLATES TO COLLECTORS

British Columbia

The first two porcelain plates, because of the material they were made of, are much more available than the flat tins of 15, 16 and 17. Most of the early BC plates up to the early 40s are harder to find than their registration figures would suggest because of the scrap metal drives that were popular in WW2. The very damp climate of BC cause most of the early issues to rust away and made very nice examples hard to find. After WW2 the BC issues are easier to find.

Tough paint years: '15, '16, '17, '18*, '26*, '35.
Singles: ??

Alberta

The first plate, 1912 is an extreme rarity, and it is not known why not more than perhaps a couple dozen examples have turned up. The following '13 porcelain, and the flat tin plates, '14 and '15 are also rare plates. The 1916 is also challenging but a number of unissued 1917 plates with multiple nail holes are around, used as roof shingles (!). Most of the embossed years from 1918 on up do not present a significant challenge and are about as rare as you might expect from the registration figures.

Tough paint years: ??
Singles: ??

Saskatchewan

The first porcelain plates and flat tins are all quite difficult to find. The multi-year 1919 base-plates are very difficult to find in nice condition as they were intended for several years of use. From 1923 onwards, the plates are more obtainable. The dry climate of Sask ensured most survived well. The extensive sun might have caused some issues to fade.

Tough paint years: '16, '17, '32, '37, '64-'66.
Singles: 12-14, 15-17, 43, 45-47, 52-54

Manitoba

The 1911 is a challenging issue to find. The 1912 to 14 porcelain issues are much more available and, like the BC porcelains, seemed to have survived in larger numbers. Many have been dug up. The '15 and '16 wire rim tin plates and flat tin '17 are challenging. The '18, because it was a two year plate, is difficult to find in better condition. From 1920 on up, most years are readily available to the casual collector. The multi-year base-plates up to the 50s may present some challenges (insofar as locating pristine examples) but the registration figures were sufficiently high to ensure they aren't rare items.

Tough Paint Years: '15*, '16, '17, '20.
Singles: '45 - '49; '88 - '96.

Ontario

Higher registration figures than any other province have made this province the easiest to collect. However the first issue leather plate (1903) is one of the rarest Canadian plates known with less than a dozen surviving example. The two succeeding leather plates are also tough, particularly the one which has "ONTARIO" spelled out. The 1911 porcelain is much more available. The flat tins with the wire rim from 1912 to 16 are available but most examples are rough. Nice examples are very difficult to come by. The flat tin plates from 1917-20 are much easier to find in nice condition, and make a fine display. From 1921 on, all the embossed tin plates are easy to

collect, however a lot of years did tend to rust easily. Suprisingly, today's graphic Ontario plate is more difficult than most provinces because of the tight regulations. Most of them are turned back to the issuing office.

Tough paint years: '12, '13*, '15*, '16, '22, '26, '29, '32, '37, '38, '47*
Singles: '03 leather, '43, '45 - '47.

Quebec

Again, higher registration figures have made this province easier to collect, however beware of the early fiberboard issues. In the earliest days, the registration figures were low, and the fiberboards simply didn't survive in great numbers for obvious reasons. The fiberboards up to 1917 are all challenging. The issues from 1918 to 1923 are easier but it is still challenging to find nice ones. The 1924 and '44 are the easiest issues and were also better made. None of the embossed tins from 1925 up present any formidable obstacle however there are few tough paint years to watch out for.

Tough paint years: most fiberboard years, '28, '30, '31*, '32, '42, '47, '50.
Singles: '45 - '49.

New Brunswick

New Brunswick had a longer run of porcelain plates than any other province making them extremely popular with collectors today. The first two issues, '11 and '12 are especially challenging. The '13 and '14 are easier but still challenging. It gets easier with '15 through '17 which are available to the average collector. The flat tins from '18 to '21 are desirable but not as desirable as those from other provinces since they lack a beautiful crest design. From 1922 onwards, the plates are suprisingly available despite the low registration figures. The New Brunswickers were rather diligent in saving their old plates it seems as runs were commonly found in barns. Aside for a few tough paint years, none of the years from that date forward should present a challenge. There are a lot of mint unissued 1928s, as well as most years in the 50s. The climate wasn't all that bad on most issues due to the inland population away from the salty air. The red plates of the 60s had a great tendency to fade, so nice bright red examples are challenging.

Tough paint years: '19, '21, '23, '24*, '29, '30, 32*, '36, '38, '42, '47, '63-'68.
Singles: '42 - '47, '62 - '68.

Nova Scotia

Since Nova Scotia had owner-provided plates until 1918, these are quite common, in various styles. Some of them are crudely made so one should be careful as to their authenticity. Most Nova Scotia plates are more readily available than their registration figures would suggest but finding nice example will be met with a lot of frustration. The salty air and moist climate caused most issues to turn to rust. The first two years are very difficult to find in nice condition. The 1920 and 21 are also challenging. Most years in the 20s right up to 1950 present their own challenges. Today's plate is now suprisingly difficult because of the very tight regulations regarding their issue. Most of them have to be turned in, and they are only issued as singles.

Tough paint years: Almost everything pre 1951, especially: '18, '19, '22, '25*, '30, '34, '35*, '41, '46, '47, '49, '50.
Singles: '98 - date

PEI

The registration figures alone tell you this is going to be a challenging province to collect. The first issues up to the 1918 flat tin are virtually non-existant to most collectors. Most runs begin with the 1919 porcelain but this too is a challenging plate to find as less than 1000 sets were made. The issues of the 20s are all difficult to find, particular in nice condition. Of particular note is the "SEEDS POTATOES FOXES" issue of 1928. It gets easier in the 30s, but again low registration figures don't make it a cake walk. The climate was pretty rough on most issues up to the early 50s. From that point forward, the plates are more available in better condition, with some small quantities of mint unissued leftovers. There are many unissued leftover plates, non-passenger (including motorcycle) available from the 1970s. The current issues are not as tightly regulated as they are in NS and

Ontario, and are attractive because of their graphics.

Tough paint years: '21, '24, '31*, '33, '43, '47, '48, '58, '59, '61.
Singles: '42-'45, '64, '65, '81 - date.

Newfoundland

The earliest Nfld plate are the most challenging of all the provinces outside of the territories. The issues up to 1925 are almost non-existant (none are known for 1921). The registration figures certainly tell you that any pre-confederation (1949) is going to be difficult to collect. By the 50s the registration figures had caught up to PEI and are about as available as PEI issues. They become much more available in the 60s and beyond. The climate was also very rough on most issues. The motorcycle plates are all difficult to find, and Nfld ranks as the hardest province in this area.

Tough Paint years: '26, '28, '45, '57.
Singles: Since 1997.

NWT & Nunavut

A very challenging jurisdiction, perhaps it is a blessing that they didn't begin to issue plates until 1941. But make no mistake about it, all the 1940s NWT plates are all extremely rare. Even most of the 50s can be difficult to find, however a few mint unissued left-over plates were found for 1953 and 58. The bright summer-long sun has caused a lot of these orange/black issues to fade, particularly the 1959. However due to the extremely dry climate, rust isn't a problem. The 60s are more available but it's not until you get to the polar bear plate that things start to become easy. The novel shape is what makes this plate one of the most popular among collectors. Because of this, it was overproduced and served as a source of revenue from tourists. There are many of them around that are mint and unissued and are a lot more common than the registration figures would suggest.

Tough paint years: '59, '60, '64.
Singles: since early 1990s.

The Nunavut plate has just come out, and already there are far more collectors out there than available plates. Short of a trip up there, it is unlikely you will see one on the road. The samples on the other hand are extremely common and the motor vehicle department seems to be stamping them out as fast as they can sell them.

Yukon

A very challenging jurisdiction for obvious reasons. Only a small handful of the flat tin plates issued before 1924 are known. This is also true for a lot of the years in the 20s. Some mint unissued left-overs have turned up for certain years in the 30s and 40s, but they are all difficult to collect today. Also extremely popular are the early miner issues before 1959. All are very difficult to find. It gets a lot easier from the early 60s to date, since the number of collectors actively saving them had increased their survival rate. There is a ton of mint-unissued leftovers for the years from 1975 to the early 80s. Like the NWT, the climate was pretty tame on the early issues, making the condition not all that challenging when you can find them.

Tough paint years: 1932, ??
Singles: since 1991 ??

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COLLECTORS' GUIDE TO GRADING LICENSE PLATES

Like any other collectible, license plates have a grading system. We emphasize that the following is a *guide* since there will always be differences in opinion, both experts and novices alike. It is generally better to grade conservatively to avoid disputes.

Painted	Reflective	Description
		Mint (m) A plate just as it was made, without any blemishes. Generally unused or unissued.
		Excellent (ex) No faults except minor wear, usually around the bolt holes. Generally the best possible grade for a used/issued plate.
		Very Good (vg) Some minor scratches or wear evident but the colors are still sharp. **tin:** minor rust spots around edges. **reflectorized:** minor corrosion around bolt holes. Stickers should be intact.
		Good (g) Satisfactory, but has a flaw of some sort. May have minor bends, scratches somewhat faded colors. Still a decent plate. **tin:** rust more evident. **refl:** minor hairline scotchlite cracking or noticeable corrosion around bolt holes. Stickers may show some damage.
		Fair Sub-standard. Often

		bent / scratched, or badly faded, sometimes metal cracking. Original colors may not be obvious. **tin:** About 25 - 50% original paint left with more rust usually on the older ones. **refl:** Shows severe scotchlite cracking or significant corrosion/discoloration under the scotchlite. Stickers often damaged.
		Poor (p) Space filler. Usually really bent, chewed-up or corners/pieces missing. Lots of rust. Looks like roadkill.
		Repainted **tin:** Little or no original paint, but plate should look close to original. The quality of the repaint should be stated. **refl:** generally not applicable.
		Needs Repainting **tin:** A restorable plate which usually has little or no paint at all. Usually only applies to old plates. Flat, solid with no noticable bends or tears or extra holes. These plates in general are about as desirable as those in **fair** condition. **refl:** Not applicable.
		Touched up **tin:** Generally less than 25% of plate has been repainted. Usually as desirable as a plate in **good** condition. **refl:** Generally does not apply. Numbers, if originally painted, could be touched up.

Additonal terms. These should be stated *in addition* to the aforementioned grade. In other words, the license plate should be graded as if these flaws weren't present. Then these flaws are listed after the grade. The same goes for major scratches and dents or anything else out of the ordinary.	**Extra Hole (xh)** **Nail Hole (nh)** **Torn Bolt Hole (tbh)**

In-between grades are possible. i.e. g-vg, f-g etc. Sometimes these are indicated by fg, gvg, g+, vg- etc...

With grading being so subjective, you are bound to get differences in opinion. Here are two others for comparison, in case you are shopping for plates elsewhere.

- PL8S (with pictures)
- The ALPCA Grading standards

With deals in bulk plates (i.e. many plates of the same kind, usually recent graphic plates) one occasionally runs into the terms 'A', 'B' and 'C' grade. This is explained below. **Click on the plates to get a better look.**

	A Grade **vg-ex** average grade. Most plates should be excellent, with the odd vg mixed in. Nice clean stock, stickers intact, no damage beyond marking around bolt-holes. Usually expected, and available for the most common recent plates.
	B Grade **g-vg** average grade. Plates are still respectible, but show some sort of flaw. Stickers may be damaged, light scuffing on numbers, minor scrapes bends etc. Not junk, but obviously not top grade material either. The less common plates often trade in 'B' grade bulk.
	C Grade **f-g** average grade. Plates show significant flaws. Usually major scrapes, scuffing dents and bends and stickers often damaged. Only a step above roadkill. Material not quite bad enough to throw away but pretty close. Only hard to get plates are worth dealing with in 'C' grade builk.

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A reference for the rest of us

1) How do I start a license plate collection?

I find most people get started by simply asking friends and family for plates they might have lying around or when they move to a new location. You may also pick some up by chance in your travels. Other good sources include:

- **Junkyards.** These are particularly attractive to the novice just starting out. Just make sure you reach an agreement with the owner before taking anything. That will prevent any mis-understandings. They are generally more accessible in rural areas, rather than near large metropolitain areas, but each one is different. Little knowledge is required here, because you will (hopefully) be spending little if any money.
- **Writing for Sample Plates.** It used to be that every state sent these free for the asking, but times have changed. There are still some states that still send them free of charge and others which charge only a nominal amount ($5 or under).
- **Writing letters to foreign countries.** This is also an excellent source, especially for obtaining foreign (usually referred to as non-North American) plates from outside your home country. Patience is required here, because unlike in North America, license plate collecting is totally unheard of in some countries, such as Japan. It also helps if you can write in the native language of the country. Based on one collector's experience, expect about one favorable response for every 10 letters you write. And with the power of the Internet you can surf the sites of foreign countries and perhaps ask webmasters if they can get some plates for you. Some collectors have got darn good collections to show for diligently using these methods
- **While Travelling:** I personally always like to have a license plate from any place I have visited. If I'm in a foreign country, this can often be a challenge. Read my tips on finding license plates in foreign countries.
- **Flea Markets.** A particularly big one can yield quite a few interesting plates, but you have to look carefully AND know what you are looking for. I would only recommend them to the novice if the amount of money to be spent isn't large because plates are more likely to be overpriced than underpriced, and you will see a lot of common plates before you will see anything scarce. The best flea markets by far are the automotive related ones. If you live near Pennsylvania, make a point of visiting Hershey and Carlisle, both held in mid October. In Canada, they hold the Barrie Automotive Flea Market north of Toronto, the second weekend in June and September.
- **Asking around.** Remember your friends who travel abroad. How about family living abroad? Or anyone you know closely tied with automobiles, or the DMV? All of these could be potentially good sources.

I would recommend for the most part to stay away from **Antique Shops** and **Auctions**. Unless you really know what you are doing, and are specific in what you are after and understand the markets, more than likely you will be overpaying.

1) Do you need a lot of money to start a license plate collection?

Absolutely not! While we have seen unprecedented price levels on a lot of rare and interesting license plates, it still must be empasized that a great collection can be assembled for very little money, if one is willing to do a little legwork. Time and money go hand in hand. One could spend a lot of money for a nice collection without investing much time, by simply surfing the web, buying expensive plates that are seen on websites and on-line auctions. On the other hand, one could build a very respectable collection without much money, if you are willing to devote some time to your hobby. You may find it worthwhile to buy a small collection of license plates to get started or build your existing collection. That way, you can effectively build a trade-stock which will serve you well down the road because many other collectors like to trade. Or you may be able to pawn off the duplicates to recoup most of your original investment.

2) Can you still have an interest in license plates without actually collecting the tin?

Absolutely! For space reasons some people choose not to collect the actual plates. I certainly could rationalize with anyone who moves around a lot, like myself. There are many who specialize in collecting photos. They take pictures of interesting plates they see on the road and make a photo album, scrap book or even a website out of them! There are others who make note of vanity plates and try to guess their meanings! Then there are still others who research the history of license plates. They are interested in how their jurisdiction issued license plates right from the beginning and may even get into who the license plates were assigned to in the early days by going through archives! So a Licensologist isn't necessarily someone who collects. I have found the collectors in Europe, who have formed *Europlate* are more conscious on the history of license plates

and less preoccupied in obtaining the actual tin.

3) What is ALPCA? Should I join?

ALPCA is *the* organization for license plate collectors. It is the largest and oldest organization of its kind in the world. It was founded in 1954 by two collectors and now boasts over 3000 active members. If you do collect, I would strongly urge you to join, even if you aren't sure how far you will go with the hobby. The friendships you will make are invaluable and you will find many willing to help a new member so it can be a great source of plates. The organization has a solid reputation and it assures you will be treated fairly when dealing with a member of that organization, since there a path of recourse if you get taken. Because of this high level of trust between members, people will extend more over to you if you become a member.

If you are interesting only in the information and research on license plates and not collecting per-se, you will still benefit from ALPCA, however *Europlate* may be the better club, particularly if you have an interest in International license plates. *Europlate* is heavy focussed on all aspects of research on license plates, and make a good effort of staying on top of all the current registration systems worldwide. They publish *the* Bible on World Plates: "Registration Plates of the World".

4) I have trouble identifying a particular plate. Can you help?

Perhaps. Unlike North American jurisdictions, many countries do not print their name on their plates. Sometimes a crest is used instead, but sometimes nothing at all. Hence there are many plates out there which are nothing more than numbers and letters on a slab of metal or plastic. Such plates can be very difficult to identify without some sort of reference like "Registration Plates of the World". Many current and former British and French Colonies have issued plates in this format and the only way to identify them is by the particular numbering code.

5) What should I collect?

That depends of course on your personal interests. Just don't try to collect everything. I think we all start out by taking anything we get our hands on, and that is fine because we aren't starting with anything. Then sooner or later you are going to have quite a number of plates and clearly this can't go on indefinitely. So once you have a good mix of a lot of stuff, then is the time to decide what you want to collect. Assemble what you want to keep and the rest become traders for things that fall into your collecting interests. Make up a trade list of what you have available and at the same time make up your want list to keep yourself organized and advertise to other collectors. What isn't interesting to you may very well be of interest to the other collector and that's how trades are made. Some popular themes:

- State or provincial runs for your birthplace or where you currently live. This is often limited to passenger (car) plates but doesn't have to be.
- Birth year runs. I specialize in my birth year, however I generally limit myself to passenger and motorcycle plates.
- Type runs (for example trying to collect a motorcycle plate form every state). This is popular for those in a particular profession (if you a truck driver you could try and collect truck plates) or hobby (a motorcyclist may show an interest in motorcycle plates or a HAM Radio operator could collect plates with Radio call-signs).
- Specializing in plates of a particular country or state. For example, I specialize in all types of Japanese license plates.
- Or you may be content on collecting interesting photographs of plates.

The key is to remain focussed. The collections that win awards and recognition at license plate trading meets are those with a definite theme.

6) How are license plates made?

Good question! They are usually made in correctional facilities. I was fortunate to tour the "TAG SHOP" at the Powhatan Correctional Center just outside of Richmond, Virginia. I learned first hand what goes into mass-producing license plates (quite a lot!) and have written up my experiences to share with all of you.

7) I have some license plates kicking around. How much are they worth?

Unlike coins and stamps, there isn't a market well enough established to give a definite answer. What license plates sell for is basically what a willing buyer is willing to pay to a willing seller. For plates commonly traded, general values have been set, and have been published in a guide to license plate values by Bob and Chuck Crisler, for US and Canadian license plates. Keep in mind this is only a guide and there is no guarantee that you will be able to sell your plates at the quoted prices, nor will you be able to find any examples available at those prices. The figures are more reliable for the readily available, more recent common plates. The guide only cover passenger (car) license plates, so for the others, you are still on your own to some

extent. And what about foreign plates? That's another whole ball of wax! Here are some general guidelines:

- Motorcycle plates are usually worth more than car plates for any particular year, truck and trailer plates are usually worth less.
- Plates from the countries which tightly control them (such as the Middle East and Japan) are more valuable than from ones which don't (such as Curacao, France and Great Britain). The values are also based, but less dependent, on population.
- New "graphic" issues often sell for exhorbitant amounts of money. It pays to be patient in most cases. The prices drop as more and more become available. There are exceptions, when an issue is retired prematurely (and can appreciate rapidly) but these generally are few and far between.

8) Are old license plates valuable?

Not necessarily. Never assume "it is old, therefore it must be valuable". Condition is of paramount important when talking about these. Few collectors want something rusted beyond repair. Even if they are in seemingly reasonable condition, the other question must be answered: how many are there to go around? States with large registration figures in the early years, such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and so on are readily available. In these cases, they're only of value in top condition. On the other hand there are other states who had such either low registration figures or a low survival rate in the early years (like Florida and Delaware) which means they are highly sought after in just about any condition.

Another sublety to consider is the possibility of a large number of mint leftover plates available. Someone may have found a lot of leftovers for a particular year in a particular state in the basement of an old building. This happens. For example, 1932 Mississippi and Arkansas plates are much easier to find (and therefore much less valuable) than the neighboring years.

A good guide for plate values is the Crisler Guide, publised by Bob and Chuck Crisler of Louisiana. They combine decades of plate collecting experience and have a good feel for the values of USA and Canadian license plates. As with any price guide, the figures should not be treated as gospel. It is just that - a guide. It is particularly helpful for the novice and highly recommended if you plate to collect North American plates. Unfortunately they only cover USA and Canadian passenger license plates. As a rule for non-passenger plates, truck and trailer plates have the least value, whereas motorcycle and political-related plates have more.

9) Should I restore my old license plates?

This is another excellent question where even the experts cannot agree on any one sure-fire answer. Restoration means anything from simple touch-up and repainting to intricate restoration work on chipped, rusted and broken porcelain plates. You must ask yourself these basic questions:

a) *Is the metal still solid?* If so, simply sanding it down and reapplying a new coat of paint will usually be sufficient. Otherwise the restoration process is more involved. Porcelain plates are usually much harder to restore than the embossed tin variety and require special care.

b) *How easy will it be to find a nice example?* If so, the expense and time involved in repainting is probably not worth it if you can find a decent example of the plate for under $20.

c) *Do I know the original colors?* It is very important to match colors exactly in repainting, otherwise your plate is going to look like a phony. The colors are known for most US plates, but this gets dicey for old plates outside of the US (which are much rarer) because so few examples are known. If you are unsure of the original colors, then it is usually better to leave the plate as is.

d) *Can I do the restoration myself or is it better to send it to someone else who can?* That depends of course on your skill and expertise and the workshop at your disposal. For rare plates, it makes sense to have a professional do it. Fees usually range from $20 to $45 per plate. If you wish to perfect the art yourself, definitely practise on common plates before you go ahead and repaint that prized rarity.

e) *Do I plan to keep or resell the plates involved?* If you plan to resell, keep in mind that you're now in the business of restoring plates and the quality of your work should measure up to the competition. If you plan to keep the plates, the quality of your work of course matters less, though it should still be done right, if for no other reason to make the plate more impressive for all to see on your wall or display.

10) Is there a standard for grading license plates?

Yes! As with any other collectible, grading guidelines and standards have been set to describe condition. The method used for license plates is very similar that that used for coins and stamps. Here are some sources:

- The ALPCA grading standards.
- A guide shown on this website.
- A pictoral representation of plate grades can be found at PL8S.

Keep in mind, that no matter what system you use, it is always best to ask yourself "Would I be happy to receive a plate described to be in that condition" when grading any particular plate. When it doubt, undergrade. I personally have very strict grading standards, and find the pictures on the PL8S site to be a notch (i.e. half a grade point) overgraded.

Another important fact is that all plates, no matter what year or rarity, should be held to the same standard. Otherwise all is lost. A 1920 Delaware plate should be graded the same way as a 1973 Ontario plate. Likewise rarity should play no part either. A 1927 Guatemala plate should be graded the same way as a 1927 Pennsylvania plate. The rarity of the plate speaks for itself, meaning that people will care less about the grade if only one or two examples of it are known. If a plate is of a so-called "tough paint year" like the 1920 Delaware, serious collectors will know that, and so will be perfectly content with an example in less than top condition. But if you overgrade a plate because it is known to be a tough paint year, then the whole system becomes misleading.

11) What do you, the Licensologist, collect and have to trade?

I am actively collecting license plates, but unfortunately not able to trade like I once was able to. Because of my job, I tend to move around a lot. This means it is cost prohibitive to move my extensive tradestock each time. I have found it easiest to put it in permanent storage and accessing it a few times a year. If I get requests for particular plates I will make a note of them, and then when I get a chance to dig through my storage, I can let you know what I come up with. As far as my collecting needs go, a lot of this is summed up on my *want* list. In a nutshell, I like:

- License plates from Japan (all types)
- License plates from my birthyear (1967). Date and jurisdiction should appear on the plate.
- License plates from Ontario (all types)
- Passenger runs for the places I have visited or lived in.

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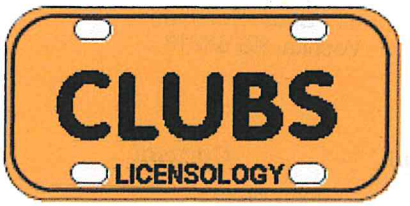

★★★ Indispensible to anyone with an interest in license plates
★★ Of interest to the discerning licensologist. Often a specific region.
★ Of some interest.
none Not reviewed.

Publications

Clubs - North America

		Dues (yearly)	Contact
ALPCA ★★★	Automobile License Plate Collectors' Association • Largest club of its kind in the World • about 3000 active members • Founded 1954. • Bi-monthy Newsletter. • Website alpca.org	• $30 First Class (US/Can) • $20 Bulk Mail (US only) • $32 Air Mail (Overseas) • $15 Junior (<18yrs)	Gary B. Kincade (Secretary) 226 Ridgeway Dr. Bridgeport, WV 26330
NILPS ★★	Nevada International License Plate Society • Quarterly Newsletter "THE MINER" usu. 12 pages. • Annual convention in mid-March, Henderson NV (usually at least 200 collectors) • Website nilps.org	• $15 US/Canada • $20 overseas	John Walters (NILPS #3) P. O. Box 33333 Las Vegas, NV 89133-3333 John Peterson (Treasurer) 612 East Essex Dr. Las Vegas, NV 89107
MLPCA ★	Michigan License Plate Collectors Association • Bimonthly N/L of 10-12 pages • Approximately 700 members. • Spring/Fall meets each year.	• $12	Greg Gibson (Secretary/Editor) 14028 North Road Fenton, MI 48430 Roy Kress, Treasurer 3306 Wood Valley Dr. Flushing, MI 48433-2264
MAPA	Mid-America Plate Association • Quarterly N/L 18-22 pages • 2 meets/yr, Northern Illinois	• $15 • $17 non-US	Les Okunowksi (Treasurer) 8218 No.Ozark Niles, IL 60714
CCC	Carolina Collectors' Club • Newsletter twice/year.	• ??	Richard Fawcett (President) P.O. Box 16566 Asheville, NC 28816
WLPS	Wyoming License Plate Society • Quarterly N/L "TAG TALK" • Annual plate meet, usually in Casper, WY area.	• $5	George Lucy (the "tagtalk" editor) 5810 Southview Rd. Laramie, WY 82070-6804
ULPCA	Utah License Plate Collector's Association • Formed Apr. 1996, current about 50 members • Spring and Fall meets in Utah • Newsletter w/ classified ads in planning stage.	• $5	Alan Aitken(President) 3859 South 3700 West. West Valley City, UT 84120 (801) 966-9994
WKLPCA	West Kansas License Plate Collector's Association • Formed in late 60's. • Two meets a year in Kansas: April, Nov.	• $10	Tom Allen 1839 East 800 Rd. Lecompton, KS 66050 (785) 887-1080

Door Prizes.
- Membership fee includes booth space at these meets.
- Newsletters (want lists) accompany each meet.

Rusty Rector (President)
611 South Pershing
Wichita, KS 67218

Clubs - International

		Dues (yearly)	Contact
Europlate	European Plate Association, specializing in the research of world plates. ☆ ☆ • quarterly N/L • Newsletter is mainly research based, with less emphasis on ads. Also publishes the "bible" of world plates: *Registration plates of the World (RPW)*, now in its 3rd edition. • World-wide convention every 2 years, scheduled between Great Britain and European Nations.	• £17 (Britain) • $40 elsewhere	John Weeks 14 Manor Rd Chedzoy, Bridgewater Somerset TA7 8QZ United Kingdom Conrad J.H. Smith Treasurer, 41 Ventnor Gardens Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE26 1QD
			Jerry Boone Dave Fraser (North American contacts)
De Nummerplaat	"The Number-Plate" • 6 Newsletters a year, in Dutch and English • Several meets a year, in Europe	??	Gerrit Prins Waardeel 75 8332 BC Steenwijk Netherlands
NPCC	Number Plate Collector's Club ☆ ☆ • Quarterly Newsletter • Annual convention, early June, and several regional meets throughout Australia	• $20Aus (Australia) • $25US Elsewhere	Geoff Knox (Secretary) PO Box 251 ROSEVILLE NSW 2069 AUSTRALIA Pablo Serazio (Treasurer)
TPT	De Taksplaat - La Plaque de Taxe • Based in Belgium. • Newsletter in Dutch/French every 3 months. • Meets every 3 months, often near Antwerpen. • Website. Good coverage on Belgium license plate history.	• $15 US	Gary Speck (US contact) Louis Fierens (president) Wommelgensteenwag 68 B-2110, Wijnegem Belgium.
AKS	AutoKennzeichen-Sammler • Based in Germany • 4 newsletters a year. • Several meets a year in Germany.	• 40 DM	Gunter Burczyk, Pelikanweg 52, D-46487 Wesel, Germany
Francoplaque	Club des Collectionneurs francophones de plaques d'immatriculation ☆ • A small collector's club based in France, but anyone can join. • No publication, membership is free. • Meeting every 3 months around Paris (since 1996). • Bilingual Website in English and French. Members are encouraged to contribute.	• free!	Vincent Moens (President) 7 Rue Stendhal 75020 Paris, FRANCE Jean-Emmanual Chevry (webmaster)

PoLPCA Polish License Plate Collectors' Association • $15 (one time) Piotr Jocek (Founder)

- One Newsletter / yr
- Newsletters in English, and not just about Polish plates.
- Website under construction.
- Free small web pages for all members

For reviews on the "bestsellers" please visit Francoplaque.
For the more esoteric book reviews visit Roger Reid's website.

Publications

	Rates (yearly)	Contact
Plate Trader ☆	• $7	Stephen Tuday 21-D Ridge Run Marietta, GA 30067 (770) 421-0864
• Bi-monthly, staggered with the ALPCA Newsletter, 10-12 pages. • Up into its 100th issue. • Heavy on advertising.		
PL8S ☆ ☆	• $20	Drew Steitz
• Bi-monthly, staggered with the ALPCA Newsletter, heavy on advertising. Free sample on demand. • Free classified mini-ads with each issue. • Free Internet mini-ads. • Website pl8s.com		
Tags 'n' Stuff ☆ ☆	• $25 first class (North America) • $20 3rd class (US only) • $35 airmail (overseas)	Roger Haynes P.O. Box 890 Concord, NC 28026-0890 Webmaster: Dennis Gray
• The only monthly publication, over 500 readers. • 24-30 pages/issue • Free copy available on request. • **NEW Website!** tagsnstuff.com		
KEYCHAIN TAG NEWS	• $10	Dr. Edward Miles 888-8th Avenue New York, NY 10019
• 4 issues a year • Subscribers are entitled to a free ad, up to 50 words each issue. • Covers DAV keychain tags, Goodrich Rubber tags, chauffeur's badges and attachments.		
Mountain Outline	• $4	George C. Sammeth, Jr., 8708 Dover Court Arvada, CO 80005
• Published April, August and December. • Free to those attending the Rocky Mtn. Regional Meets; • Free to Colorado ALPCA members		
WISCONSIN DAIRYLAND NEWSLETTER	• $7.50	Dale Brigger 2937 East Dale Avenue Cudahy, WI 53110
• Quarterly Newsletter, 8 to 10 pages • Free to members of the ALPCA Dairyland Regional meet.		
GOLD RUSH REGION NEWS	• $10	Lee Vander Heide
• sporadic newsletter • For the Gold Rush Regional of ALPCA		
TAG-A-LONG		David Lacey

- quarterly newsletter of the Southern California Regional (ALPCA)
- Distributed free to attendees at their quarterly meets;
- no subscriptions are encouraged but back issues are often available (50¢ ea)

1124 Melrose Way
Vista, CA
92083

NEW MEXICO ROADRUNNER

Jay Melin
9012 Camino Del Sol, NE.
Albuquerque, NM 87111

- quarterly newsletter for members of the Land of Enchantment Regional (NILPS)

License Plate Collectors (LPC)

- $3

George Chartrand
P.O. Box 334
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2C 5B7
CANADA

- Bi-annual. Spring and Fall issues
- Includes many newspaper articles.
- Subscription includes free classified ad in every issue.

Pacific Islands Plate Club

- ??

Gerald Boone

- Currently defunct. A club with an informative newsletter.
- e-mail Gerald if you have any interest. The club may be restarted depending on the positive response.

Island Plate Chronicle

- $4.50 / issue
- $6.50 outside US

Bob Bittner
P.O. Box 747
Rowley, MA
01969
(978) 948-7734

- Covers latest news on all the Caribbean Islands with a different island featured every issue.
- Issued yearly, no specific month. Next due by end of 1999
- 24 pages including 3 color pages.

Readers are encouraged to contact the representatives listed for further information.
Any corrections or additions should be addressed to the webmaster

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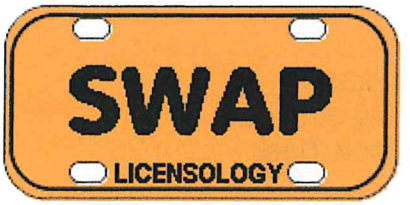
Last Updated Apr 15, 1999



Tigerboy's Trading Corner

Unfortunately I don't have the time to trade license plates as much as I used to, however I do entertain trades for harder to find items specificaly on my *Want* list. I am always willing to buy outright the items listed on that list.

I used to maintain a detailed inventory, but I found it difficult to maintain a long list as items were sold or traded away, or when new stuff came in. Furthermore, my extensive trade stock is mostly in storage and therefore not as accessible as it once was. If you are looking for something specific and I think I have it, I will let you know the next time I anticipate going through my inventory. If I feel I cannot help you in a reasonable amount of time, then I would be more than happy to refer you to another collector who can perhaps fulfill your needs.

Thanks for your understanding,

Joseph "Tigerboy" Sallmen

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Last updated May 26, 2001

WANTED

The following list gives you a good idea what I collect. An asterisk (*) indicates a plate I need to upgrade; vg or better needed. My strongest interests are the Swiss, Japanese, 1967 dated, Canadian and Tiger related plates. email tiger@canplates.com

Last updated Jan 11, 2003

Canadian plates:

I am writing a book on the History of Canadian License Plates and I am particularly interested in passenger runs, then rare and unusual types:

- **Motorcycle** plates: **Current** Nfld, Nunavut, Also, most pre 1960.
- Man. '48 booster (front) plate w/ bison; **License Plate Toppers** (Canadian Cities/Towns, CAA; any and all).
- **ANY plates from Nunavut. No samples.**
- **Special Events**: BC Commonwealth Games '94, any **Royal visit** plates, Ontario (RV*81 & '82), Imperial Economic Conference, etc.
- Any **political** related plates; especially #1 plates; **Consul** and **Diplo**.
- **War Amps Keychain tags**: All provinces before 1950. BC before 1955, NB before 1964, Que before 1958, any years NWT, Yukon or PEI.
- **Military** CDN forces in Germany green/white for military vehicles. Any motorcycle CDN forces / AF plates. Anything unusual.
- **Ont:** 11 Dealer (w / letters), 15E & 16T (both cardboard plates), 36 Comm. locktab*, 39 Doctor (reflectorized numbers). **Ottawa bicycle:** 55 and prior
- **HAM Radio**: BC: VA7, Que: 52*, 53*, VA2, NB: 60, 61* 62-68, NS: VE1 1990 and later, PEI: Current base; Nfld (VO2): 68 and prior; current base. NWT: '63-'65; Nunavut (VY0)

Passenger runs:

- **BC:** 1915-17; **Alta:** 1913-15; **Sask:** '59 reflectorized (number under 1000); **Man:** 1912-19 (crest); 1975 Remote Area (RA)*
- **Ont:** pre-11 leathers/rubbers, 13*; **Que:** 1915 and prior, 17, 22*, 23*, 30*, 31*, 32*; **NB:** 1914 and prior, 18*, 24*, 36*, 42*
- **PEI:** any undated fiber/tin/porcelain (pre 1920), 24, 27*, 28*, 31*, 33*, 42*, 45*, 47*; 66 reflectorized; **Ambulance/Hearse:** '73-'75 base, no slogan
- **Nfld:** 1937 (crown)*; **NWT:** 51 and prior, 55*; **Yukon:** 1952 and prior, 3/53 - 3/55 (miner w/ tabs), 55, 56, 57*, 58*; **pre-provincials:** *Any* plates from pre 1910 era.

International Interests:

- Anything **Japanese** (all types considered including Okinawa & Ryukyu Islands). Visit my web-site to learn more about Japanese plates! (http://www.tigerdude.com/japan/license)
- **Switzerland: Especially need GL, SH.** Will consider any permanent plates (no red stripe).
- Italian **Aosta (AO)** plate, w/ crest. All types considered; **Monaco:** all types considered, especially the old white/blue steel plate.
- Other countries considered, provided they have colorful graphics, crests, shields etc. Please inquire.

1967 dated plates (for my birthyear runs):

- **Pass:** Foreign except: Aruba, Mex, Amer Samoa, Virgin Is, Canal Zone, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Philippines, Suriname
- **m/c:** DC*, MA (blue/white undated)*. Canada: NB (66 base/w 67 sticker)*, NWT (67 tab on 66 base). Foreign: Any.
- **HAM Radio:** Canada: Que Expo67/Confed. *matching* pair*, NB ('66 base)
  US: AL, AZ*, CA, DE, DC, ID, KY, ME, MD, MA, MS, MO, NV, NJ, NM, NY, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD*, TN, UT, VT, WA, WY.
- **Key Chain tags (DAV/War Amps):** AK, CT, DE, DC, GA, ID, KS, MT, NM, ND, OR, SC, UT, WY, PEI.
- **Samples:** HI, UT; NWT (tab only with '000' imprinted) - may not exist
- **Others:** Any unusual types, will consider almost anything outside of truck or trailer classes.
- **Diplomatic:** Que '67 CD & CC matching pairs. NB '67 ('66 base) DPL prefix. Anything political.

Motorcycle Birth year runs for my bikes ('61 Triumph Cub, '72 BMW, '99 Tiger)

- **1961:** Need any except KS & IA.
- **1972:** AL, AR, CT, DE, GA, HI, ID, IL, ME, NV, NJ, ND, OH, OR, SD, VT, WA, DC
- **1999:** AR, CT, DE, FL, HI, ID, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MA, MI, MN, MO, NE, NV, NY, ND, OH, OR, SC, VT, VA, WA, WI, DC

US Classic stuff:

- Early picture plates: AR '38 Map, AZ '17 Steer, FL '20s Map, ID '28 Potato SC '26-'27 Palm; **Inaugurals (DC):** 1949 and prior.
- **Old m/c only:** MD 1941 and prior, 3/44, 3/45, 3/46, 3/51*, 3/53*, 57*. **Old WV, DC, DE m/c:** (pre 1965 only).
- **DC:** 1928 and prior, 30, 34*, 45 tab, 48 tab
- **DE:** 1909, 10, 16-17*, 20-24*, 26*, 27*, 28*, 37*, tabs 41-60. Black stainless steel bases*

Modern graphics:

- Latest graphic pass. plates for: AL (stars), DC ("TAXATION..." & "www....gov"), IL (Lincoln's Head), NE (yellow base), ND (Lewis&Clark)
- Latest graphic m/c plates: MI (Bridge), MO (Fading Blue), NY (Empire)
- Aerospace related plates (graphics, vanities, NASA, Moon, Mars, you name it)

Special Numbers, vanities, misc:

- **Any TIGER** related plates. These can be vanities, booster, tag toppers, or real plates. If it has a tiger on it, I'm probably interested. Especially need: Mizzou (MO), Savannah State (GA), Australia (WA) Claremont football plate.
- International plates (custom made vanities) wanted that read "TIGER" in the native language.
  So far I have got Aland, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal South Africa, Spain, and Switzerland. I need any others.
- Other Vanities: BISON, MOOSE.
- Numeric: 5, 9 (John Olerud's numbers), 7100 (my ALPCA #). Prefer pure numerics with no prefix/suffix letters.
- Plates with the same serial number as year. Two or four digit cases, i.e. #1971 or #71 on a '71 dated plate.
- **Garbage Truck & Rubbish collector related plates:** I used to follow the garbage truck as a youngster.

There should be an appropriate legend on the plate.

Ontario non-passenger (specialist - most types, most years):

Motorcycle: 1925 and prior, 27-29, 30*, 32*, 33, 34*, 44, 45*, 47*
Motorcycle Dealer (DL or M prefix/suffix): all except 65, 73, 74, 75, 77, 81; **Car Dealer M-suffix:** 1963 and prior, 64*, 70*
Diplomatic (CD): 52 and prior, 55, 58, **CDx red/wht:** 87 and after; **Lt-Gov (Large Crown) - any**
Political: Any 1973 and later bases with these prefixes: CAN, MHC, ONx, MPP, SEN, FCJ, PJO, SCO, CCJ.
Consular Corps (CC series): 62 and prior, 64, 66, 71 + Any years white on red.**CCx series:** 73, 74, 76, 78, 82-84, 86 and after.
Embassy Staff: F prefix: 59, 60, 62-65, 67; **XTx series (red):** 86 and after; **XOR (red):** any
Sample: 36 and prior, 39, 42, 44, 45, 46, 50-56; **Quarterly bus (BU-BZ):** Jun: 79; Dec: 76; **Quarterly Farm:** Mar 78
Doctor (D prefix): 37, 38, 39, 41, 43*, 45, 46*, 47, 51*, 54*, 60*; **War Amps Key Chain Tags:** 46, 47; **Forces plates (F suffix):** WW2 time period ('39-'45), also white/brown undated;
PCV: 54 and before, 56, 59*, 63*, 71 green/white; **Public Veh:** 59 & prior, 62*, 63*, 64*, 66*, 68, 69, 70*, 80
School Veh: 50 & prior, 54*, 55, 56*, 57, 63*, 68*, 70, 71, 75;

Current reflectorized bases needed for all types except dealer, passenger, truck, trailer, Lt-Gov.

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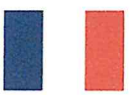
LINKS

We have chosen specifically to list links to websites which have the best coverage of a particular country or jurisdiction. If you know of a website which provides especially good coverage on a particular country's vehicle registration system, we would be more than happy to add it to this page. Please e-mail us the link so that we may review the website. Unfortunately we are not able to link to every website on license plates out there (as there are literally hundreds) - we like to list those which are leaders in a particular area.

Other "Worldly" Sites

Australia: An outstanding site with many photos of license plate organized by the states in Australia. Many unusual and graphic types are shown here, as the author keeps abreast of the new issues. If you have a question about Australia, this is the place.



France: The official site of Francoplaque. A bilingual site (both in English and French) it has a lot of material. Certainly there is extensive coverage of French plates, but this site also contains book reviews, clubs, and coverage on other countries.

Italy: Michele Berionne has done a good job covering Italian license plates by photographing plates in Rome.

Japan: Tigerboy's latest trip to Japan has given him the opportunity to photograph many plates and compile a good synopsis of what you can see on the road. There are some interesting links to Japanese web sites.

Slovenia: A country you don't hear too much about, but there is a nice site put together describing their license plates.

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